

PEORIA FASHION WEEK ACADEMY

ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES MANUAL

Governance • Ethics • Financial Stewardship • Safety • Transparency

Adopted	June 2026
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This manual establishes the organizational policies that guide Peoria Fashion Week Academy in ethical governance, responsible operations, participant safety, financial accountability, transparency, and mission-centered decision-making.

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POLICY 1 - PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

1.1 Purpose

These Organizational Policies establish standards for the ethical, financial, administrative, and programmatic operations of Peoria Fashion Week Academy (the “Academy”).

- Protect the Academy's mission.
- Promote ethical and responsible operations.
- Protect students and program participants.
- Establish financial accountability.
- Protect organizational assets.
- Promote transparency.
- Reduce organizational risk.
- Establish consistent expectations for employees, Board members, contractors, volunteers, instructors, interns, and representatives.

1.2 Application

Unless otherwise stated, these policies apply to:

- Board members
- Officers
- Executive leadership
- Employees
- Contractors
- Instructors
- Volunteers
- Interns
- Committee members
- Program representatives
- Individuals authorized to conduct business on behalf of the Academy

1.3 Relationship to Other Governing Documents

These policies shall be interpreted consistently with the Academy's Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Board Policies, Employee Handbook, program procedures, contracts, and other Board-approved policies. If these Organizational Policies conflict with the Bylaws, the Bylaws shall control.

POLICY 2 - CODE OF ETHICS

2.1 Ethical Standard

Peoria Fashion Week Academy expects all individuals representing the organization to conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, professionalism, fairness, and respect. Individuals acting on behalf of the Academy shall place the mission and interests of the organization above personal gain.

2.2 Expected Conduct

- Act honestly and in good faith.
- Treat participants, colleagues, families, partners, donors, vendors, and community members with dignity.

- Protect confidential information.
- Properly use organizational funds and property.
- Avoid conflicts of interest.
- Follow applicable organizational policies.
- Maintain accurate records.
- Avoid discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and retaliation.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that supports the reputation and mission of the Academy.

2.3 Prohibited Conduct

- Fraud
- Theft
- Misappropriation of funds
- Falsification of records
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Retaliation
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
- Abuse of organizational resources
- Serious conflicts of interest
- Improper personal benefit
- Knowingly misleading donors, partners, Board members, or participants
- Conduct that creates substantial risk to the organization or its participants

POLICY 3 - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that decisions made on behalf of the Academy are based on the organization's best interests.

3.2 Disclosure

Board members, officers, and key staff shall complete a written Conflict of Interest Disclosure at least annually. Individuals must also disclose conflicts as they arise.

3.3 Examples of Potential Conflicts

- Ownership of or financial interest in a vendor.
- Employment by a company doing business with the Academy.
- Contracts involving relatives or close personal associates.
- Gifts or benefits offered in connection with organizational decisions.
- Personal financial interests affected by a Board decision.
- Business opportunities discovered through an Academy position.
- Outside organizations competing for the same opportunity or funding.

3.4 Procedure

1. Disclose the conflict.
2. Provide relevant factual information if requested.

3. Refrain from attempting to influence the decision.
4. Leave the discussion when requested.
5. Abstain from voting or approval.

The disclosure and recusal should be documented.

POLICY 4 - WHISTLEBLOWER AND NON-RETALIATION

4.1 Purpose

Individuals associated with the Academy are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing without fear of retaliation.

4.2 Reportable Concerns

- Fraud
- Theft
- Misuse of funds
- Financial irregularities
- Falsification of documents
- Conflicts of interest
- Abuse or neglect
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Safety violations
- Serious policy violations
- Retaliation
- Other unethical conduct

4.3 Reporting

Concerns may be reported to the Executive Director, Board Chair, Board Vice Chair, Governance Committee Chair, or another designated Board officer when necessary. If the concern involves one of these individuals, the report should be directed to another uninvolved leader.

4.4 Non-Retaliation

No person acting in good faith shall be punished, threatened, intimidated, terminated, excluded, demoted, or otherwise retaliated against for reporting a reasonable concern. Knowingly filing a false or malicious allegation is not protected conduct.

POLICY 5 - NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Peoria Fashion Week Academy is committed to an inclusive environment. The Academy shall not discriminate in its programs, employment, volunteer opportunities, Board service, contracting, or organizational activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, or veteran status. The Academy shall strive to ensure equitable access to its educational and artistic programs.

POLICY 6 - CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

6.1 Confidential Information

- Student information
- Parent or guardian information
- Personnel records
- Applications
- Financial data
- Donor information
- Contracts
- Legal matters
- Medical or emergency information
- Board executive-session discussions
- Passwords
- Personal identifying information
- Internal complaints
- Investigations
- Unreleased organizational plans

6.2 Responsibility

Confidential information shall only be accessed by individuals who need the information to perform authorized responsibilities.

- Do not share confidential information casually.
- Do not post confidential information online.
- Do not store confidential information in unsecured locations.
- Do not send confidential information to unauthorized individuals.
- Do not use confidential information for personal purposes.

Confidentiality obligations continue after an individual's relationship with the Academy ends.

POLICY 7 - FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

7.1 Purpose

The Academy shall maintain responsible financial systems designed to safeguard assets, provide accurate financial reporting, and ensure appropriate use of charitable resources.

7.2 Annual Budget

An annual operating budget shall be prepared and presented to the Board for approval.

7.3 Financial Reports

The Board should regularly receive reports identifying:

- Revenue
- Expenses
- Budget-to-actual performance
- Cash position
- Grants

- Sponsorships
- Program revenue
- Restricted funds
- Outstanding obligations
- Significant financial concerns

7.4 Separation of Duties

Whenever reasonably possible, responsibility for receiving funds, recording transactions, approving expenditures, reconciling bank accounts, and issuing payments should be separated. No individual should exercise unchecked control over all stages of a financial transaction.

7.5 Bank Accounts

Organizational funds shall be maintained in accounts held in the legal name of Peoria Fashion Week Academy. Personal accounts shall not be used to hold Academy funds.

7.6 Cash Handling

- Cash should be counted by at least two individuals whenever practicable.
- Cash receipts should be documented.
- Cash should be secured promptly.
- Deposits should be made in a timely manner.
- Cash activity should be reconciled with available sales or registration records.

7.7 Financial Review

The Board shall determine annually whether an audit, review, compilation, or other external financial review is appropriate based on organizational circumstances, funding requirements, and applicable requirements.

7.8 Form 990

The Board shall be provided an opportunity to review the organization's Form 990 before filing.

POLICY 8 - PURCHASING AND REIMBURSEMENTS

8.1 Organizational Purchases

- Serve a legitimate organizational purpose.
- Remain within an approved budget whenever applicable.
- Be appropriately documented.
- Be authorized by an individual with spending authority.

8.2 Personal Expenses

Academy funds shall not be used for personal expenses.

8.3 Reimbursement

Individuals seeking reimbursement must provide reasonable documentation such as a receipt, invoice, proof of payment, and explanation of business purpose. Reimbursement requests should be submitted promptly.

8.4 Large or Unusual Purchases

Large, unusual, or unbudgeted purchases should receive additional approval from appropriate executive or Board leadership.

POLICY 9 - GIFT ACCEPTANCE AND SPONSORSHIP

9.1 Acceptance of Gifts

The Academy may accept charitable contributions that support its mission, including cash, checks, online donations, grants, sponsorships, equipment, fabric and materials, sewing machines, technology, supplies, professional services, and other in-kind contributions.

9.2 Restricted Gifts

Restricted donations shall be used for the purpose designated by the donor if the Academy accepts the restriction. The Academy may decline a restricted contribution if the restriction is inconsistent with the mission, unreasonably burdensome, unlawful, impractical, or financially harmful.

9.3 Gifts That May Be Declined

- Create excessive liability.
- Require unacceptable conditions.
- Conflict with organizational values.
- Damage the organization's reputation.
- Create an improper personal benefit.

9.4 Sponsorships

Sponsorship agreements should clearly identify the sponsorship amount or contribution, benefits provided, recognition promised, event or program covered, payment schedule, and duration of agreement.

POLICY 10 - DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION

10.1 Permanently Maintained Records

- Articles of Incorporation
- IRS determination letter
- Bylaws and amendments
- Board-approved policies
- Board meeting minutes
- Major Board resolutions
- Annual financial statements
- Significant legal documents
- Major historical organizational records

10.2 Other Records

Financial, personnel, program, grant, donor, contract, insurance, and administrative records shall be retained according to an organizational retention schedule appropriate to the type of record.

10.3 Litigation or Investigation Hold

Records relevant to actual or reasonably anticipated litigation, investigation, audit, or legal proceeding shall not be destroyed until authorized.

10.4 Secure Destruction

Confidential records shall be destroyed securely when their approved retention period expires.

POLICY 11 - RECORDS AND TRANSPARENCY

The Academy is committed to responsible nonprofit transparency. Appropriate organizational information may be made publicly available, including:

- Mission
- Leadership
- Board roster
- Bylaws
- Selected policies
- Annual reports
- Appropriate financial information
- Public tax filings
- Programs
- Community impact
- Major partnerships

Information protected by privacy, legal, personnel, donor, contractual, or safety considerations shall not be publicly released.

POLICY 12 - YOUTH PROTECTION AND PARTICIPANT SAFETY

Because the Academy provides educational programs that may include minors, participant safety is a central organizational responsibility.

12.1 General Standard

Employees, instructors, volunteers, contractors, and program representatives shall maintain appropriate professional boundaries with minors.

12.2 Prohibited Conduct

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Grooming behavior
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Threats
- Corporal punishment
- Inappropriate sexual conversation
- Inappropriate touching
- Providing minors alcohol or illegal substances
- Inappropriate private electronic communication with minors

12.3 One-on-One Interaction

When reasonably possible, interactions involving a minor and an adult representative should occur in observable locations, in program spaces accessible to others, and with appropriate organizational awareness.

12.4 Communication With Minors

Organizational communication with minors should be professional and program-related. For younger participants, parents or guardians should be included in important program communications whenever appropriate.

12.5 Background Screening

The Academy may require criminal background checks or other screening for employees, contractors, instructors, or volunteers whose responsibilities include regular interaction with youth.

12.6 Reporting

Suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, or serious safety concerns shall be reported promptly through appropriate Academy procedures and to appropriate authorities when legally required.

POLICY 13 - VOLUNTEER AND CONTRACTOR STANDARDS

Volunteers and contractors are expected to:

- Support the Academy's mission.
- Follow applicable organizational policies.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Complete assigned responsibilities.
- Follow safety requirements.
- Properly use Academy property.
- Avoid conflicts of interest.
- Treat participants respectfully.

Contractors are not authorized to make commitments on behalf of the Academy unless specifically authorized.

POLICY 14 - SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

14.1 Official Communication

Only authorized individuals may issue official statements on behalf of the Academy.

14.2 Personal Social Media

Individuals associated with the Academy may express personal opinions but should not present those opinions as official organizational positions.

14.3 Confidentiality

Confidential information shall never be shared on social media.

14.4 Participant Images

Photos or video of students and program participants should only be used when appropriate permission or releases have been obtained.

14.5 Brand Protection

Use of Academy logos, branding, photography, video, and official materials should follow organizational branding standards.

POLICY 15 - TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Academy-owned technology and accounts are intended primarily for legitimate organizational purposes. This includes email accounts, websites, social media accounts, cloud storage, computers, tablets, phones, registration platforms, financial systems, design platforms, and other digital tools.

- Protect passwords.
- Use strong passwords.
- Avoid sharing login credentials unnecessarily.
- Protect confidential information.
- Report lost devices or suspected account compromises.
- Avoid unauthorized software or systems.

Important organizational accounts should not depend solely on the personal credentials of one individual whenever avoidable.

POLICY 16 - INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND CREATIVE WORK

Because the Academy operates within fashion and the creative arts, creative ownership shall be respected.

16.1 Student Work

Students generally retain ownership of original creative work they produce unless another written agreement applies. The Academy may request permission to photograph, exhibit, promote, or showcase student work.

16.2 Academy Materials

Materials created specifically for the Academy as part of paid employment or commissioned contractual work may be considered Academy property when established by agreement.

16.3 Third-Party Work

The Academy shall make reasonable efforts not to improperly reproduce copyrighted designs, photographs, music, logos, written materials, patterns, artwork, videos, or other protected creative material.

POLICY 17 - FACILITY, EQUIPMENT, AND PROPERTY USE

Academy property shall be used responsibly. This includes sewing machines, computers, cameras, lighting, fabric, patterns, tools, furniture, technology, event equipment, supplies, and other organizational assets.

Individuals shall report damaged, lost, stolen, or unsafe equipment promptly. Academy property shall not be removed for personal use without authorization.

POLICY 18 - SAFETY, INCIDENT REPORTING, AND RISK MANAGEMENT

18.1 General Responsibility

All representatives are expected to identify and report hazards or unsafe conditions.

18.2 Incidents

Significant incidents should be documented. Examples include:

- Participant injuries
- Medical emergencies
- Property damage
- Threats
- Violence
- Missing participants
- Safety violations
- Equipment injuries
- Allegations of misconduct
- Significant event disruptions

18.3 Emergency Response

Emergency medical or public safety assistance should be contacted when circumstances reasonably require immediate intervention.

18.4 Insurance

The Academy shall maintain insurance appropriate to its operations, programs, leadership, events, and organizational risks.

POLICY 19 - COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Participants, parents, employees, volunteers, instructors, contractors, and community partners may raise concerns regarding Academy programs or operations. Whenever practicable, concerns should first be addressed with the individual responsible for the program or activity. Concerns involving serious misconduct may be reported directly to executive or Board leadership.

Complaints should be addressed promptly, fairly, respectfully, confidentially to the extent reasonably possible, and without retaliation.

Complaints involving the Executive Director may be referred to the Board Chair or another designated Board officer. Complaints involving the Board Chair may be referred to the Vice Chair or Governance Committee.

POLICY 20 - ANTI-HARASSMENT AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The Academy prohibits harassment, intimidation, bullying, threatening conduct, and other serious unprofessional behavior. This policy applies to interactions among employees, Board members, students, parents, volunteers, instructors, contractors, vendors, partners, and guests.

Sexual harassment and unwelcome sexual behavior are prohibited. Retaliation against an individual who reports a concern in good faith is prohibited.

POLICY 21 - ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Peoria Fashion Week Academy strives to make its programs accessible. Individuals who need a reasonable accommodation should be encouraged to communicate their needs to the Academy.

The Academy will consider requests based on participant needs, program requirements, safety, available resources, and the nature of the requested accommodation. The Academy should seek inclusive solutions whenever reasonably possible.

POLICY 22 - EMERGENCY AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY

The Academy should maintain procedures for responding to emergencies that may interrupt operations. Possible circumstances include severe weather, fire, facility closure, technology failure, public safety concerns, medical emergencies, financial emergencies, loss of key organizational records, and unexpected leadership absence.

Critical organizational information should be stored in a manner that allows appropriate leadership to access essential records during an emergency. Emergency contact information should be maintained for key leadership.

POLICY 23 - POLICY ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW

23.1 Authority

These Organizational Policies were adopted and approved by the Peoria Fashion Week Academy Board of Directors in June 2026.

23.2 Executive Responsibility

The Executive Director is responsible for implementing Board-approved organizational policies in daily operations.

23.3 Policy Review

These policies should be reviewed at least every two years, or earlier when organizational operations materially change, new programs are introduced, the Bylaws are amended, significant risk or compliance concerns arise, or Board leadership determines revisions are necessary.

23.4 Amendments

The Board may amend these policies by appropriate Board action.

ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received or been provided access to the Peoria Fashion Week Academy Organizational Policies Manual. I understand that I am responsible for following the policies applicable to my role.

Name: _____

Position/Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

BOARD ADOPTION AND CERTIFICATION

The Peoria Fashion Week Academy Board of Directors hereby certifies that this Organizational Policies Manual was adopted and approved in June 2026.

Board Chair/President Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Board Secretary Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

POLICY REVIEW RECORD

Review Date	Action Taken	Approved By
June 2026	Adopted and Approved	Board of Directors
_____	Revised / Reviewed	_____
_____	Revised / Reviewed	_____
_____	Revised / Reviewed	_____

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