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Personalized Plan of Action

- 1. Guiding Principle:** I commit to making sure all students feel heard and seen in my classroom.

Rationale: It is important to remember that students are coming to the classroom from a wide variety of backgrounds, be it social, cultural, racial, or otherwise, that are related to identity. With this in mind, making sure that all students feel comfortable sharing their unique perspectives and voices is crucial. The main way to facilitate this is by taking a step back and allowing students to speak up in the space rather than filling the silence with my own narrative, and by allowing students to contribute to each other's learning rather than just facilitation by one individual. This is especially important when working with students who have minority backgrounds. When students are more naturally quiet, it is okay to ask them individually if they would like to share, so that the kids that are more talkative do not drown out the voice of this student.

- 2. Guiding Principle:** Students should always be receiving the full picture of a situation, especially when parts of that picture have gone historically underrepresented.

Rationale: It is tempting to want to stick to whatever narrative of history has been most prevalent in the past and what is generally accepted within the curriculum. However, making sure to expand these notions is part of being an antiracist educator and helps students of Color and other minority students feel more accepted within the classroom. It is most important to

recognize bias and marginalization within these scenarios, and to tell the story differently than students might have heard before. This entails doing more research on topics and conveying this information in a way that is understandable and informative to students.

- 3. Guiding Principle:** I dedicate myself to treating all my students with kindness, patience, and respect, regardless of their background.

Rationale: I will ensure that I have patience and kindness for my students to the best of my ability. This includes making sure that other students in the classroom are doing the same as well, and that everyone is practicing equity to the best of their abilities. This also entails calling out behavior that is inappropriate, unjust, or disrespectful to the classroom environment. This often means speaking one-on-one with the individual who has perpetrated that behavior, and making them understand why that is unjust. If an apology is necessary, as an educator, I will help to facilitate this as a part of learning. Part of being kind and patient is making sure to let students know when their actions or words have hurt others. As a teacher, I feel I am the facilitator of having this sort of welcoming environment, so it is my responsibility to make sure that all students, and myself, are abiding by these practices. This means maintaining respectful relationships with students that will allow them to feel comfortable apologizing when they are called out.

- 4. Guiding Principle:** I will protect my own privacy and boundaries, and those of students, when it comes to relationships with students.

Rationale: It is also important to highlight the areas of my life where students are not welcome. It is my policy not to interact with students via social media, nor to discuss my personal life beyond basic facts about me (eg. who my family is, some of my hobbies, etc.). Examples of information that would be too personal would be information about my health or

interpersonal relationships. This is especially true of bad-mouthing or defaming any other person, in particular colleagues. Additionally, interactions with students and their families outside of school should be kept professional, cordial, and brief where possible. This excludes relationships that predate classroom involvement, but once that involvement is introduced, proper boundaries of professionalism must be set and maintained.

- 5. Guiding Principle:** I will protect my own privacy and boundaries, and those of parents, when it comes to relationships with parents.

Rationale: Not only does it become crucial to maintain some distance from students in my personal life, the same is also true of relationships with parents. Because parents are more easily entered into the category of “peers” than students are, this can be tricky. In these situations, if the parent was not a friend previously, it is important to keep the relationship there professional and have it stick to the school environment whenever possible. Additionally, parents can sometimes become upset or lash out at the teacher if their student is struggling, perhaps believing that the teacher is at fault. Parents, too, come from a wide variety of backgrounds and have a wide variety of experiences, and this is important to keep in mind. In these instances, it is best to remain calm and try to communicate with the parent so that they may better understand the perspective of the teacher. However, if lines are crossed, getting supervisors or higher-ups at the school would be appropriate. Wherever possible, it is wise to keep the relationship with parents about their child, and specifically about that child’s performance and behavior in the classroom.

- 6. Guiding Principle:** I will make sure to report instances of suspected abuse or maltreatment of minors when appropriate.

Rationale: As a mandated reporter, I will make it my policy to be observant of my students and to try to gather more information if any particular student seems to be struggling or in distress about anything at home or otherwise outside of school. In any instance where there is reasonable suspicion of maltreatment of any sort, I will first try to approach the student to get more information from them about what is going on. It is key here to make sure that any student who is telling me information about these circumstances knows that I am required to report anything that makes me concerned for their safety or wellbeing. If I deem it appropriate, I will then take this information and report it orally to a supervisor or other applicable authority within 24 hours, followed by a written report submitted to the same places (including the police, if applicable) within 72 hours.

- 7. Guiding Principle:** I will share my own perspective and experience in the classroom when appropriate, while also understanding the limitations of my experiences and when it is better to let others do the talking.

Rationale: As a queer female educator, and someone who has mental health struggles, I have certain experiences of marginalization that I can share with students when the course material is related, or when students ask me about my experiences. These identities are important to me, and are important to students who may be going through struggles in finding their own identities in the world. Having these identities allows me to provide an individual connection with students who might also share those identities. By sharing my perspective from these identities, I am able to give a sense of being a role model to these children and can help them navigate what may be a difficult and complex time in their lives. However, my experiences based on my identity are limited. For example, I am not a racial minority, nor am I disabled, of a minority religion, or neurodivergent. Since I do not and cannot relate to all students' lived

experiences, I will find ways to support those who I relate to less on the same level as I would support the students that I do relate to. In situations where an adult with one of these identities would be accessible to these children, and where their presence and perspective is requested, it would be best to direct these children in the direction of these adults, who are more qualified to speak to these experiences, should they feel comfortable doing so. Where the perspective of one of these minorities is not available, literature, film, and/or other media sources can be used in the classroom to shed light on these identities, what they mean, and how young people with these identities can navigate them.

8. Guiding Principle: I will not tolerate any bullying, prejudice, or hateful actions or words in my classroom.

Rationale: One of the characteristics of children is that they may not understand the ways in which what they say or do could be harmful to others. Sometimes, kids see someone who is different from them and are simply curious, but end up being invasive or rude to other children. Additionally, sometimes parents have an influence on their kids here, who might behave in ways that are prejudiced without understanding how they are harmful or wrong. However, as an educator, I feel that it is my job to correct or at least help children identify these kinds of behaviors. This means calling out behaviors that are bullying or otherwise prejudiced and explaining their impact to that child. This also means making sure the children in my class understand that they are always able to come to me as a resource if there is someone who is behaving in such a way towards them.

9. Guiding Principle: When I make mistakes, I will do my best to atone for them and to do better in the future.

Rationale: I recognize that I am not perfect, and that I will make mistakes in the classroom. Not every moment will be my best one, and I will likely forget to do things that I intended to. I view these mistakes as a learning opportunity– as time goes on, I hope that I will feel I have a better grip on how to handle my profession and will make fewer mistakes, but especially as I start out, practical experience is crucial and invaluable. Mistakes may be hard to swallow, but I will do my best to see them as an opportunity to improve myself. This is especially true of situations where a colleague makes me aware of a way in which I could be improving or of a way in which I am at a deficit. In these situations, I hope to take this criticism in a truly constructive manner and turn it into action within my classroom.

10. Guiding Principle: I will foster an environment where children love to learn, and hope to inspire children to be lifelong learners.

Rationale: When I was a child, I always loved learning. I think the most important part of any classroom is instilling this love of learning wherever possible. Though the school environment is not for everyone, I hope that all students in my classroom get the opportunity to discover something they are interested in and enjoy learning about that topic. If students are struggling to find that something, I want to go out of my way to make sure that they find it.