

Caregiver Reference Manual



This is not a contract or agreement of employment with Stride HealthCare.

The original manual is electronic and should always be referenced directly. Printed copies can be altered or be out-of-date.

This manual is only for use by non-medical in-home caregivers of Stride HealthCare. This manual is not applicable to skilled nursing services.

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Section 1: Welcome

1.1 Manual Purpose

Stride HealthCare created this Caregiver Reference Manual to give caregivers clear guidance on the standards, policies, and expectations that apply while working with participants, families, office staff, and the company.

This manual is designed to help caregivers understand how to work safely, professionally, and consistently in the home care setting. It explains what Stride HealthCare expects, what caregivers are responsible for, and when caregivers must contact the office for guidance.

This manual is not meant to replace the participant's service plan, care instructions, training, supervisor direction, or applicable law. If a caregiver is ever unsure what to do, the caregiver must stop, use good judgment, and contact the office before continuing.

This manual may be updated as company needs, South Carolina Medicaid requirements, licensing standards, employment laws, or internal procedures change.

1.2 Who This Applies To

This manual applies to all Stride HealthCare caregivers who provide, support, or are assigned to provide in-home care services to participants.

This includes full-time, part-time, PRN, temporary, and as-needed caregivers. It also applies during any shift, training, orientation, meeting, phone call, message, documentation activity, transportation task, or other work-related activity connected to Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers are expected to follow this manual while working in a participant's home, in the community, during transportation, while communicating with the office, and while using any company-related system or documentation process.

If a caregiver receives a specific instruction from the office, nurse, supervisor, participant service plan, or authorized representative, that instruction must be followed unless it is unsafe, unauthorized,

illegal, outside the caregiver's scope, or unclear. If there is a concern, the caregiver must contact the office immediately.

1.3 Mission and Care Philosophy

Stride HealthCare's mission is to provide dependable, respectful, person-first home care that helps participants remain safe, supported, and as independent as possible in the place they call home.

We believe home care should be professional, consistent, and human. Every participant deserves to be treated with dignity, privacy, patience, and respect. Every caregiver is expected to provide care in a way that protects the participant's rights, supports the participant's choices, and follows the approved service plan.

Stride HealthCare is a modern, person-first, and technology-driven home care agency. We use systems, documentation, communication tools, and data to improve care, strengthen accountability, and support better service outcomes. Caregivers are expected to use required systems correctly and communicate with the office when support is needed.

Care at Stride HealthCare should be:

- Respectful
- Reliable
- Safe
- Professional
- Person-first
- Within the authorized scope of care
- Documented accurately
- Focused on the participant's needs and service plan

Caregivers do not provide medical care, skilled nursing care, or services outside the approved scope of care.

1.4 Representing Stride HealthCare

Caregivers represent Stride HealthCare every time they enter a participant's home, speak with a participant or family member, communicate with the office, document a shift, transport a participant, or interact with others while working.

Caregivers are expected to represent Stride HealthCare with professionalism, honesty, patience, and good judgment. The way a caregiver speaks, dresses, documents, arrives for shifts, handles concerns, and respects boundaries directly affects the participant's experience and the company's reputation.

Caregivers must:

- Arrive on time and ready to work.
- Follow the participant's service plan and assigned tasks.
- Treat participants, families, coworkers, and office staff with respect.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality.
- Communicate with the office when something changes.
- Use Electronic Visit Verification and documentation systems correctly.
- Avoid behavior that could harm trust, safety, or professionalism.
- Never perform tasks that are unauthorized, unsafe, medical, or outside the caregiver's role.

Caregivers may not speak or act on behalf of Stride HealthCare unless authorized by the office. Questions from outside agencies, case managers, family members, legal representatives, media, or other third parties should be referred to the office.

1.5 Caregiver Responsibility

Each caregiver is responsible for reading, understanding, and following this manual.

Caregivers are also responsible for asking questions when something is unclear. Not understanding a policy does not remove the caregiver's responsibility to follow it. If a caregiver is unsure about a rule, task, participant request,

documentation requirement, or safety concern, the caregiver must contact the office before acting.

Caregivers are responsible for:

- Knowing the policies that apply to their work.
- Following the participant's service plan.
- Staying within the caregiver scope of care.
- Clocking in and out correctly.
- Completing required documentation accurately.
- Reporting incidents, concerns, changes, and unsafe conditions.
- Maintaining professional boundaries.
- Protecting participant privacy.
- Completing required training and competency requirements.
- Keeping personal contact, payroll, and credential information current.

Caregivers are expected to use sound judgment. If a situation feels unsafe, unclear, inappropriate, or outside the approved service plan, the caregiver must stop and contact the office.

1.6 Policy Updates

Stride HealthCare may update, revise, add, remove, or replace policies at any time based on company needs, participant safety, regulatory requirements, Medicaid requirements, licensing standards, operational changes, or legal requirements.

When policies are updated, caregivers may be notified through one or more of the following methods:

- Written notice
- Email
- Text message
- Employee system notification
- Training session
- Staff meeting
- Updated handbook or manual
- Direct communication from the office

Caregivers are responsible for reviewing policy updates and following the most current version of company policy.

If a policy update conflicts with an older version of this manual, the most recent instruction or policy issued by Stride HealthCare controls.

Failure to follow current policies may result in coaching, corrective action, removal from shifts, suspension, or termination of employment, depending on the situation.

Section 2: Employment

2.1 At-Will Employment

Employment with Stride HealthCare is at-will.

This means the caregiver or Stride HealthCare may end the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice, and with or without cause, as allowed by law.

Nothing in this manual creates a contract of employment, a promise of continued employment, or a guarantee of scheduled hours, assignments, pay increases, promotions, or continued placement with any participant.

Stride HealthCare may change job duties, work locations, schedules, participant assignments, policies, procedures, benefits, or employment conditions as business needs, participant needs, Medicaid requirements, licensing requirements, or legal requirements change.

Only a written agreement signed by an authorized company representative may change the at-will employment relationship. No verbal statement by a supervisor, office staff member, participant, family member, or other person changes the at-will relationship.

2.2 Equal Opportunity and Respectful Workplace

Stride HealthCare is committed to providing equal employment opportunity and maintaining a respectful workplace.

Employment decisions are based on business needs, caregiver qualifications, job performance, availability, participant needs, service requirements, company policy, and applicable law. Stride HealthCare does not unlawfully discriminate against applicants or employees based on race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, military status, or any other status protected by law.

Stride HealthCare does not tolerate unlawful harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.

Caregivers are expected to treat participants, families, coworkers, supervisors, office staff, and outside professionals with respect. Disrespectful, threatening, harassing, bullying, intimidating, or discriminatory behavior is not acceptable.

Examples of behavior that may violate this policy include:

- Offensive jokes, slurs, comments, insults, or name-calling.
- Harassing text messages, calls, social media posts, or electronic messages.
- Unwanted sexual comments, advances, touching, or requests.
- Mocking someone's disability, religion, race, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, or other protected status.
- Threatening, intimidating, or retaliating against someone for making a complaint or participating in an investigation.
- Treating someone unfairly because they reported a concern in good faith.

Caregivers who experience, witness, or become aware of possible harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or disrespectful workplace behavior must report it to the office as soon as possible.

Stride HealthCare will review concerns and take appropriate action. Retaliation against anyone who reports a concern in good faith, participates in a review, or cooperates with an investigation is not allowed.

2.3 Caregiver Qualifications

Caregivers must meet the qualifications required by Stride HealthCare, South Carolina licensing standards, Medicaid requirements, participant needs, and assigned job duties.

At minimum, caregivers must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be able to read, write, and communicate effectively with participants, families, supervisors, and the office.
- Be able to follow the participant's service plan and assigned tasks.
- Be capable of performing assigned duties safely and appropriately.
- Be able to use required systems, including Electronic Visit Verification when assigned.
- Complete required orientation, training, and competency requirements.
- Meet background check, registry check, exclusion screening, and drug testing requirements.
- Maintain professional conduct and good judgment while working.
- Maintain the ability to safely perform essential job duties.
- Maintain a valid driver's license, acceptable driving record, and current auto insurance if transporting participants or performing driving-related duties.

Caregivers may only accept assignments they are qualified, trained, and authorized to perform. A caregiver must not perform a task that is unsafe, unclear, medical, skilled, unauthorized, or outside the caregiver's role.

If a caregiver does not feel able to perform an assigned task safely, the caregiver must stop and contact the office before continuing.

Stride HealthCare may deny, pause, remove, or end an assignment if a caregiver does not meet job qualifications, participant needs, safety requirements, documentation requirements, Medicaid requirements, or company standards.

Family Relationship Limits

Some family members may not be paid caregivers for certain Medicaid participants under South Carolina Medicaid rules.

Stride HealthCare will review family relationships before assigning a caregiver to a participant. Caregivers must disclose any family, household, guardianship, legal responsibility, or personal relationship with a participant before accepting an assignment.

A caregiver must not hide or misrepresent a relationship with a participant or participant's family. Failure to disclose a relationship may result in removal from the assignment, corrective action, or termination.

2.4 Hiring Documents

Caregivers must provide all hiring, onboarding, employment, payroll, screening, training, and credential documents required by Stride HealthCare.

Required documents may include, but are not limited to:

- Employment application or resume.
- Government-issued identification or other acceptable identity documentation.
- Form I-9 employment eligibility documents.
- Tax withholding forms.
- Payroll and direct deposit information.
- Emergency contact information.
- Background check authorization.
- Drug testing documentation.
- Competency evaluation documentation.
- Training and in-service documentation.
- Policy acknowledgments.
- Confidentiality and HIPAA acknowledgments.
- EVV and timekeeping acknowledgments.
- Driver's license, driving record, and auto insurance, if driving is part of the caregiver's duties.
- Health, tuberculosis, fitness-for-duty, or other documentation required by law, regulation,

- payer requirements, company policy, or assigned duties.

Caregivers are responsible for providing accurate, complete, and current information. False, incomplete, altered, expired, misleading, or fraudulent documents may result in withdrawal of a job offer, removal from assignments, corrective action, or termination.

Caregivers must complete required documents by the deadline given by Stride HealthCare. Failure to provide required documentation may delay hiring, delay assignment, pause scheduled shifts, or result in separation from employment.

For Form I-9 employment eligibility verification, caregivers may choose which acceptable documents to present from the list allowed by federal law. Stride HealthCare will not require a caregiver to provide one specific document if other acceptable documents are allowed.

2.5 Screening Requirements

Stride HealthCare requires screening before employment and at required intervals during employment.

Screening may include:

- State Law Enforcement Division criminal background check.
- Certified Nursing Assistant Registry check.
- Office of Inspector General exclusion screening.
- Sex offender registry review, when applicable.
- Nurse aide registry or other registry review, when applicable.
- Drug testing.
- Driving record review, if transportation or driving-related duties are assigned.
- Any other screening required by law, regulation, Medicaid, licensing standards, payer requirements, or company policy.

Caregivers must cooperate with all required screening. A caregiver may not begin or continue working if required screening is incomplete,

expired, refused, failed, or shows a result that prevents the caregiver from providing services.

A caregiver must notify Stride HealthCare immediately if, during employment, the caregiver:

- Is arrested, charged, convicted, pleads guilty, or pleads no contest to a criminal offense.
- Is listed on an exclusion list, abuse registry, sex offender registry, or disqualifying registry.
- Has a professional license, certification, or credential suspended, revoked, restricted, or investigated.
- Has a driver's license suspended, revoked, expired, or restricted.
- Loses required auto insurance.
- Receives a driving violation that may affect participant transportation.
- Becomes unable to meet any screening or work requirement.

Stride HealthCare may remove a caregiver from shifts while a screening issue is reviewed.

Continued employment or assignment depends on the nature of the issue, participant safety, company policy, Medicaid requirements, licensing requirements, and applicable law.

Failure to disclose required information may result in corrective action or termination.

2.6 Drug-Free Workplace

Stride HealthCare maintains a drug-free and alcohol-free workplace.

Caregivers must report to work fit for duty and able to safely perform assigned responsibilities.

Caregivers may not work while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, misused prescription medication, controlled substances, or any substance that affects judgment, alertness, coordination, behavior, or safety.

Caregivers may not use, possess, sell, distribute, transfer, or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, unauthorized controlled substances, or misused prescription medication while:

- Working a shift.
- Reporting to a participant's home.
- Transporting or escorting a participant.
- Performing company business.
- Attending training or meetings.
- Using company systems.
- Representing Stride HealthCare.

Stride HealthCare may require drug testing as allowed or required by law, regulation, licensing standards, Medicaid requirements, or company policy. This may include pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion, post-incident, return-to-duty, or other required testing.

A caregiver who refuses a required drug test, delays testing, tampers with a test, fails to cooperate with testing, or tests positive without acceptable medical documentation may be removed from assignments and may be subject to corrective action or termination.

Prescription or over-the-counter medication may be used only as legally prescribed or directed. However, caregivers must not work if medication affects their ability to safely perform job duties. If a caregiver is taking medication that may affect safe work performance, the caregiver must notify the office before working.

Caregivers are not required to disclose private medical details unless needed for work restrictions, fitness for duty, accommodations, safety, or legal compliance. Stride HealthCare may request appropriate documentation when necessary.

2.7 Identification Badge

Caregivers must wear or display their Stride HealthCare identification badge when serving participants or representing the company.

The identification badge helps participants, families, supervisors, and others confirm that the caregiver is connected to Stride HealthCare. The badge must identify Stride HealthCare and the caregiver.

Caregivers must:

- Bring their badge to every shift.
- Display the badge when serving participants.
- Keep the badge clean, readable, and professional.
- Protect the badge from loss, misuse, or damage.
- Never allow another person to use the badge.
- Notify the office immediately if the badge is lost, stolen, damaged, or incorrect.
- Return the badge upon request or at separation from employment.

A caregiver may not alter, copy, lend, share, or misuse a Stride HealthCare identification badge.

Failure to use the identification badge as required may result in removal from a shift, corrective action, or other employment action.

2.8 Information Changes

Caregivers must keep Stride HealthCare updated with accurate personal, employment, credential, payroll, and work-related information.

Caregivers must notify the office promptly of changes to:

- Name.
- Address.
- Phone number.
- Email address.
- Emergency contact.
- Availability.
- Transportation status.
- Driver's license.
- Auto insurance.
- Driving record.
- Payroll or direct deposit information.
- Work authorization information.
- Criminal history or pending charges.
- Registry, exclusion, or screening status.
- Health status, injury, restrictions, or ability to perform essential job duties.
- Training, certification, or credential status.

- Any relationship with a participant that may affect assignment eligibility.

Changes that may affect the caregiver's ability to work, drive, transport, communicate, document, or safely perform duties must be reported before the caregiver works another shift.

Routine contact or payroll updates should be reported as soon as possible so Stride HealthCare can maintain accurate records and avoid missed notices, payroll issues, scheduling problems, or compliance concerns.

Caregivers are responsible for checking messages from Stride HealthCare and responding to office communication when required. Failure to keep information current may result in missed shifts, delayed communication, payroll issues, removal from assignments, corrective action, or termination.

Section 3: Training

3.1 Orientation

All caregivers must complete Stride HealthCare's required orientation before being assigned to work with participants.

Orientation is designed to make sure caregivers understand the company's basic expectations, the caregiver role, participant rights, safety rules, documentation requirements, privacy expectations, Electronic Visit Verification requirements, and the limits of non-medical home care.

Orientation may include:

- Company standards and caregiver expectations.
- Participant rights and person-first care.
- Scope of care and prohibited tasks.
- Service plan and task list expectations.
- Electronic Visit Verification.
- Clock-in and clock-out rules.
- Documentation and recordkeeping.
- Confidentiality and HIPAA expectations.
- Abuse, neglect, exploitation, and reporting responsibilities.
- Infection control and hand hygiene.
- Emergency response and basic safety.
- Professional conduct, boundaries, and communication.
- Attendance, call-outs, and scheduling expectations.
- Transportation rules, if applicable.
- Required acknowledgments and forms.

Caregivers may not assume they are cleared to work simply because orientation has started. A caregiver is cleared to begin working only when Stride HealthCare confirms that all required onboarding, screening, documentation, training, and competency requirements have been completed.

Caregivers are expected to pay attention during orientation, ask questions, complete all required forms, and follow all instructions given by Stride HealthCare.

3.2 Competency Evaluation

Caregivers must complete required competency evaluation requirements before providing services to participants.

A competency evaluation is used to confirm that the caregiver understands the caregiver role, can follow the participant's service plan, can perform assigned non-medical tasks safely, and understands key responsibilities related to documentation, safety, privacy, reporting, and participant care.

Competency evaluation may include written questions, verbal questions, skills review, scenario-based questions, observation, return demonstration, or other methods approved by Stride HealthCare.

The caregiver must demonstrate understanding of topics such as:

- Confidentiality and accountability.
- Prevention of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Fire safety and disaster preparedness.
- Basic first aid and emergency response.
- Medication reminder limits.
- Basic recognition of participant changes or concerns.
- Documentation and recordkeeping.
- Ethics and interpersonal relationships.
- Safe lifting, transfers, repositioning, and fall prevention.
- Scope of care and prohibited tasks.
- Electronic Visit Verification and timekeeping.
- Participant rights and person-first care.

Caregivers assigned to Children's Personal Care may be required to complete additional competency review specific to children's services, child safety, pediatric needs, behavior de-escalation, age-appropriate assistance, and the service limits that apply to children's care.

A caregiver must not provide services until the required competency evaluation is completed, documented, and accepted by Stride HealthCare.

Passing a competency evaluation does not authorize a caregiver to perform medical care, skilled nursing care, medication administration, wound care, injections, procedures, or any task outside the caregiver's approved scope.

If a caregiver does not pass a required competency evaluation, Stride HealthCare may require retraining, reassessment, assignment limits, removal from certain services, or separation from employment depending on the situation.

3.3 Annual Training

Caregivers must complete required annual training and in-service education.

Stride HealthCare's standard annual caregiver training requirement is ten hours per calendar year for caregivers providing Personal Care, Children's Personal Care, Respite, or other assigned Medicaid in-home care services unless Stride HealthCare approves a different requirement for a specific role or service.

The annual training requirement may be prorated during a caregiver's first calendar year of employment based on the caregiver's hire date and applicable program requirements.

Stride HealthCare may use a combination of self-study training, live training, instructor-led training, online training, skills review, team training, quizzes, scenario-based review, and supervisor-led training.

Self-study training may be used only as allowed by applicable requirements. When the ten-hour annual training standard applies, no more than six hours may be completed through self-study. Stride HealthCare may require live, instructor-led, or supervisor-led training for the remaining hours.

Annual training may include:

- Participant rights and dignity.
- Confidentiality and HIPAA.
- Abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Documentation and recordkeeping.
- Electronic Visit Verification.

- Timekeeping and time fraud prevention.
- Infection control.
- Emergency preparedness.
- Basic first aid.
- Fire safety.
- Safe lifting and transfers.
- Fall prevention.
- Medication reminder limits.
- Professional boundaries.
- Ethics and communication.
- Service plan and task list compliance.
- Reporting changes in participant condition.
- Dementia, disability, cognitive impairment, or other condition-specific care topics.
- Children's Personal Care topics, when applicable.
- Transportation safety, when applicable.
- Any additional topic required by Stride HealthCare, Medicaid, licensing standards, payer requirements, or participant needs.

Caregivers assigned only to Companion services must complete the training required for Companion services and may also be required by Stride HealthCare to complete the full annual caregiver training package.

Annual training is a condition of continued employment and continued assignment. A caregiver who does not complete required training may be removed from shifts until training is completed.

3.4 Training Documentation

Stride HealthCare must maintain documentation of required training, orientation, competency, and in-service education.

Caregivers are responsible for completing all required sign-in sheets, acknowledgments, quizzes, attestations, forms, electronic confirmations, or other training documentation required by Stride HealthCare.

Training documentation may include:

- Date of training.

- Training title or subject.
- Training objectives.
- Training content or outline.
- Length of training.
- Name and title of trainer.
- Caregiver name.
- Caregiver signature or electronic acknowledgment.
- Trainer signature, when required.
- Location or delivery method.
- Total training hours completed.
- Quiz, test, competency, or completion results, when applicable.

Caregivers must sign or acknowledge training honestly. A caregiver may not sign for another person, allow another person to sign for them, falsify training time, skip required training while claiming attendance, or misrepresent completion of any training requirement.

Training records may be kept in the caregiver's personnel file, annual in-service file, electronic training system, or another company-approved record system.

Failure to complete or properly document training may result in removal from shifts, delay in assignment, corrective action, or termination.

3.5 Missed Training Requirements

Required training is part of the caregiver's job.

Caregivers are expected to complete training by the deadline provided by Stride HealthCare. This includes orientation, annual training, competency evaluation, retraining, corrective training, service-specific training, system training, and any other required education.

If a caregiver cannot attend or complete required training by the deadline, the caregiver must notify the office before the deadline and request instructions.

Failure to complete required training may result in:

- Not being cleared to begin work.

- Removal from scheduled shifts.
- Delay in receiving new assignments.
- Loss of eligibility for certain services.
- Corrective action.
- Termination of employment.

Stride HealthCare may require a caregiver to repeat training if the caregiver does not understand the material, fails a quiz or competency review, demonstrates unsafe practice, violates policy, has documentation problems, or needs additional support.

A caregiver who misses live training, fails to complete self-study training, does not return required forms, or does not complete required acknowledgments may be considered non-compliant with training requirements.

Training is not optional. A caregiver may not refuse required training and continue working unless Stride HealthCare determines the caregiver remains eligible and compliant.

3.6 Asking Questions

Caregivers are expected to ask questions when they do not understand a policy, task, service plan instruction, documentation rule, safety issue, or participant request.

Asking questions is part of safe care. It is better to pause and confirm than to guess and make a mistake.

Caregivers must contact the office when:

- A task is unclear.
- The participant asks for something not listed on the service plan or task list.
- The caregiver is unsure whether a task is allowed.
- The caregiver is uncomfortable performing a task.
- The caregiver has not been trained to perform a task safely.
- A participant's condition changes.
- A participant refuses care.

- A family member gives instructions that conflict with the service plan.
- The caregiver feels unsafe.
- Documentation, clock-in, or clock-out issues occur.
- A privacy, incident, or reporting concern occurs.

Caregivers must not guess, improvise, or rely only on participant or family instructions when the task may be outside the service plan, outside the caregiver's scope, unsafe, or unclear.

No caregiver will be disciplined for asking a good-faith question about how to safely and properly perform their job. However, a caregiver may be disciplined for ignoring training, failing to ask for help, acting outside the caregiver role, or continuing a task after recognizing that the task is unsafe or unclear.

3.7 Fitness for Duty

Caregivers must be fit for duty when reporting to work, attending training, transporting participants, documenting services, communicating with participants or families, and performing any company-related responsibility.

Fitness for duty means the caregiver is physically, mentally, and emotionally able to safely and professionally perform assigned duties.

Caregivers must not work if they are unable to safely perform their responsibilities due to illness, injury, impairment, fatigue, medication effects, emotional distress, unsafe physical limitations, or any other condition that may place the caregiver, participant, or others at risk.

Caregivers must notify the office before working if they:

- Are sick with symptoms that may be contagious.
- Have a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or other symptoms that may affect safe care.
- Have been exposed to a communicable illness and need guidance.

- Have an injury or medical restriction that affects their ability to work.
- Are taking medication that may affect alertness, judgment, coordination, or safety.
- Are too fatigued to safely work.
- Are emotionally unable to safely provide care.
- Cannot safely lift, transfer, reposition, assist, drive, document, or complete assigned duties.

Stride HealthCare may require a caregiver to provide documentation, medical clearance, work restrictions, or a return-to-work note when appropriate.

A caregiver must not hide a limitation, illness, injury, restriction, or safety concern in order to keep a shift. Participant safety comes first.

If Stride HealthCare determines that a caregiver is not fit for duty, the caregiver may be removed from the shift, sent home, restricted from certain duties, required to provide documentation, placed on leave, reassigned, or subject to other action based on the situation.

Fitness for duty also includes professional readiness. Caregivers must report to work alert, respectful, appropriately dressed, able to communicate, able to follow instructions, and prepared to provide safe care.

Section 4: Scheduling

4.1 Shift Commitment

A scheduled shift is a work commitment.

When a caregiver accepts a shift, the caregiver is responsible for reporting to that shift on time, ready to work, and prepared to complete the assigned services according to the participant's service plan, schedule, and authorized tasks.

Participants depend on scheduled caregivers for support with daily living, safety, supervision, and routine care. A missed shift, late arrival, or early departure can affect the participant's safety, the family's trust, the company's compliance, and the continuity of care.

Caregivers must:

- Review their schedule regularly.
- Report to accepted shifts on time.
- Be ready to begin work at the scheduled start time.
- Stay for the full scheduled shift unless the office approves otherwise.
- Contact the office immediately if anything may affect the shift.
- Never assume a shift is cancelled unless the office confirms it.
- Never send another person to work a shift in their place.
- Never trade, give away, or change a shift without office approval.
- Never leave a participant without following company procedure.

A caregiver who accepts a shift and then fails to work it as scheduled may be subject to coaching, corrective action, removal from assignments, suspension, or termination, depending on the situation.

4.2 Availability and Schedule Changes

Caregivers are responsible for keeping their availability current and accurate.

Availability means the days, times, locations, services, transportation ability, and assignment conditions that a caregiver is realistically able to

work. Caregivers must not provide availability they cannot consistently honor.

Caregivers must notify the office as soon as possible when their availability changes. This includes changes related to school, another job, transportation, childcare, health restrictions, family responsibilities, travel, personal limitations, or any other issue that may affect scheduling.

Availability changes are requests and must be approved by the office before they are treated as active schedule changes. Stride HealthCare will review availability changes based on participant needs, staffing needs, service continuity, Medicaid requirements, and company operations.

Caregivers must not tell a participant or family that their schedule has changed unless the office has approved and communicated the change.

Turning down a shift before accepting it is allowed. However, repeated refusal of available shifts, refusal of reasonable assignments, limited availability, or frequent schedule restrictions may affect future assignment opportunities.

Once a shift is accepted or scheduled, the caregiver is expected to work it unless the office approves a change or an emergency prevents the caregiver from working.

4.3 Tardiness and Callouts

Attendance and punctuality are essential parts of the caregiver role.

A caregiver is tardy when the caregiver is not ready to begin work at the scheduled start time. Even a short delay can affect participant care, family routines, office scheduling, and Medicaid service delivery.

If a caregiver may be late, the caregiver must contact the office as soon as possible before the shift start time. The caregiver must provide the reason for the delay, estimated arrival time, and any information the office needs to protect the participant's care.

A caregiver must not only notify the participant or family. The office must be notified.

A call-out occurs when a caregiver cannot work a scheduled shift. Caregivers must call out as soon as they know they cannot work. Waiting until the last minute makes it harder for Stride HealthCare to arrange coverage and may place the participant at risk.

Call-outs must be made through the office or approved on-call process. A text message, message to the participant, message to a family member, or message sent through an unofficial method is not enough unless the office has specifically approved that method.

When calling out, the caregiver must provide:

- Name.
- Participant name.
- Scheduled shift date and time.
- Reason for the call-out.
- Whether the caregiver expects to miss additional shifts.
- Any information needed for participant safety or scheduling coverage.

Excessive tardiness, repeated call-outs, patterns of absence, unreliable availability, or failure to follow the call-out process may result in coaching, corrective action, removal from assignments, suspension, or termination.

No-Call / No-Show

A no-call / no-show occurs when a caregiver fails to report to a scheduled shift and does not properly notify the office before the shift.

No-call / no-show is a serious violation because it can place a participant at risk and creates an immediate service coverage problem.

Examples of no-call / no-show include:

- Not arriving for a scheduled shift and not contacting the office.

- Contacting only the participant or family instead of the office.
- Sending a message after the shift has already started without an emergency reason.
- Refusing to respond to office contact about a missed shift.
- Abandoning a shift before it begins.
- Assuming a shift was cancelled without office confirmation.

A single no-call / no-show may result in removal from the participant assignment, suspension, job abandonment review, or termination. Repeated no-call / no-show behavior may result in termination.

Stride HealthCare may consider emergency circumstances, but the caregiver is still responsible for contacting the office as soon as safely possible.

4.4 Leaving Early

Caregivers are expected to stay for the full scheduled shift unless the office approves an early departure.

A caregiver may not leave a participant early simply because tasks are finished, the participant is sleeping, the participant says the caregiver can leave, a family member says the caregiver can leave, or the caregiver has somewhere else to be.

If the participant asks the caregiver to leave early, refuses care, leaves the home, is unavailable, is taken by emergency services, is admitted to a facility, or the shift otherwise ends early, the caregiver must contact the office immediately and follow instructions.

Caregivers must clock out when authorized care ends. Caregivers must not remain clocked in for time that is not authorized, not worked, not spent providing approved services, or not directed by the office.

A caregiver may leave early only when:

- The office approves the early departure.

- Emergency services, police, or another authorized party has taken over and the office has been notified.
- The participant has been safely transferred or admitted and the caregiver has followed office instructions.
- The caregiver is unsafe and must leave to protect personal safety, after contacting 911 and/or the office as appropriate.
- Another lawful or emergency reason requires leaving, and the caregiver contacts the office as soon as safely possible.

Leaving early without office approval may result in coaching, corrective action, removal from assignments, suspension, or termination.

4.5 Participant Unavailable

Caregivers must follow company procedure when a participant is not home, refuses care, does not answer the door, is unavailable, is in the hospital, is at an appointment, leaves the home, or ends care early.

The caregiver must not assume the shift is cancelled. The caregiver must contact the office immediately for instructions.

If the caregiver arrives for a scheduled shift and cannot provide services, the caregiver must:

- Confirm the correct date, time, and address.
- Attempt reasonable contact as directed by the office.
- Contact the office immediately.
- Follow office instructions before leaving.
- Document the situation as instructed.
- Clock in or out only according to office and EVV instructions.
- Not remain on the clock unless the office directs the caregiver to do so.
- Not provide services if the participant is in a setting where services are not authorized.
- Not argue with the participant or family.

If the participant refuses care, the caregiver must respect the participant's choice and notify the

office. The caregiver must not pressure, threaten, shame, or argue with the participant.

If the participant repeatedly refuses care, is repeatedly unavailable, or there are repeated attempted or missed visits, Stride HealthCare may need to notify the participant's case manager, care coordinator, waiver case manager, or other required party.

Caregivers must report these situations quickly so the office can meet documentation, EVV, service plan, and Medicaid requirements.

4.6 Personal Time Off

Personal time off is unpaid unless Stride HealthCare provides written approval stating otherwise.

Personal time off may be used for planned personal needs, appointments, travel, family matters, personal obligations, or other non-emergency reasons.

Caregivers should request personal time off at least 14 calendar days in advance whenever possible. Submitting a request does not guarantee approval.

Time off requests are reviewed based on:

- Participant needs.
- Staffing coverage.
- Service continuity.
- Frequency of requests.
- Caregiver attendance history.
- Timing of the request.
- Business needs.
- Compliance requirements.

Caregivers should not purchase travel, make non-refundable plans, or assume time off is approved until the office confirms approval.

If a caregiver takes personal time off without approval, fails to report for a scheduled shift, or extends time off without approval, the caregiver may be subject to corrective action, removal from

assignments, job abandonment review, or termination.

4.7 Sick Leave

Sick leave is unpaid unless Stride HealthCare provides written approval stating otherwise or unless paid leave is required by applicable law.

Caregivers must not report to work when they are too ill to safely provide care or when they may expose a participant to a communicable illness.

A caregiver must notify the office as soon as possible when the caregiver is sick and cannot work. Notice should be given before the scheduled shift whenever possible.

The caregiver must provide:

- The scheduled shift affected.
- Whether the caregiver expects to miss more than one shift.
- Whether symptoms may be contagious.
- Whether the caregiver has restrictions that may affect safe work.
- When the caregiver expects to return.

Caregivers should not provide private medical details that are not needed for scheduling, safety, return-to-work clearance, work restrictions, or compliance. However, caregivers must provide enough information for the office to determine whether the caregiver can safely work.

Stride HealthCare may require a doctor's note, return-to-work note, work restriction note, or medical clearance before the caregiver returns to work. This may be required after illness, injury, hospitalization, communicable symptoms, repeated sick callouts, missed shifts, or any situation where participant safety or caregiver fitness for duty may be affected.

Doctor's notes and return-to-work documentation may be verified by Stride HealthCare. A caregiver who submits false, altered, misleading, or fraudulent documentation may be subject to termination.

A caregiver must not return to work if a healthcare provider has restricted the caregiver from work or if the caregiver cannot safely perform assigned duties.

Failure to follow the sick leave call-out process may result in corrective action.

4.8 Emergency Leave

Emergency leave is unpaid unless Stride HealthCare provides written approval stating otherwise or unless paid leave is required by applicable law.

Emergency leave may be used when a sudden, serious, and unexpected situation prevents the caregiver from working as scheduled.

Examples may include:

- Serious personal emergency.
- Sudden family emergency.
- Emergency childcare issue.
- Emergency transportation issue.
- Unsafe travel situation.
- Accident.
- Sudden illness or injury.
- Other urgent situation that could not reasonably be planned in advance.

Caregivers must notify the office as soon as safely possible when an emergency affects a scheduled shift. The caregiver must not wait until after the shift unless the emergency prevents communication.

Stride HealthCare may request documentation or additional information when appropriate. The company may review repeated emergency leave use, patterns of emergency absences, or emergencies that repeatedly affect participant coverage.

Emergency leave does not excuse a caregiver from contacting the office. When the immediate emergency has passed, the caregiver must follow up with the office and provide expected return information.

Misuse of emergency leave may result in corrective action or termination.

4.9 Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave is unpaid unless Stride HealthCare provides written approval stating otherwise.

Bereavement leave may be requested after the death of an immediate family member or another close personal relationship approved by Stride HealthCare.

Immediate family may include a spouse, child, parent, stepparent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, legal guardian, domestic partner, or other person whose relationship to the caregiver is similar to an immediate family relationship.

Caregivers should notify the office as soon as possible when bereavement leave is needed.

Stride HealthCare may approve up to two scheduled workdays of unpaid bereavement leave unless additional time is approved. Additional time may be requested as unpaid personal time off or another approved leave type.

Stride HealthCare may request basic documentation when appropriate, such as an obituary, funeral notice, memorial program, or other reasonable confirmation.

Bereavement leave must not be misused. False or misleading bereavement leave information may result in corrective action or termination.

4.10 Protected Leave

Stride HealthCare will comply with protected leave requirements under applicable federal, state, and local law.

Protected leave may include, when applicable, jury duty leave, military leave, family and medical leave, disability-related leave, pregnancy-related leave, workers' compensation-related leave, or other legally protected leave.

Protected leave is unpaid unless Stride HealthCare provides written approval stating otherwise or unless paid leave is required by law.

Jury Duty

Caregivers must notify the office as soon as possible after receiving a jury summons, subpoena, or other court notice requiring attendance.

The caregiver must provide a copy of the notice if requested. Stride HealthCare may also request proof of attendance after jury duty or court service.

Caregivers may not be disciplined for serving on a jury as protected by law. However, caregivers must communicate with the office about scheduling, expected absence dates, and return-to-work timing.

If the caregiver is released from jury duty or court service earlier than expected, the caregiver must contact the office for scheduling instructions.

Military Leave

Caregivers who need leave for military service, military training, National Guard duty, reserve duty, or other covered uniformed service must notify the office as soon as possible.

Advance notice should be given unless notice is impossible, unreasonable, or prevented by military necessity.

Stride HealthCare may request orders, training notices, or other documentation when allowed by law. Military leave will be handled according to applicable law, including reemployment rights when those rights apply.

Family and Medical Leave

Family and Medical Leave may be available if Stride HealthCare is a covered employer under the Family and Medical Leave Act and the caregiver meets the eligibility requirements.

When applicable, Family and Medical Leave may provide eligible employees with unpaid, job-protected leave for certain qualifying family,

medical, military caregiver, or qualifying exigency reasons.

Caregivers must give advance notice when the need for leave is foreseeable. When the need for leave is not foreseeable, the caregiver must notify the office as soon as practicable.

Stride HealthCare may require medical certification, recertification, return-to-work documentation, or other documentation allowed by law.

Nothing in this policy guarantees that every caregiver is eligible for Family and Medical Leave. Eligibility depends on the law, company coverage, hours worked, length of employment, worksite requirements, and the reason for leave.

Other Protected Leave or Accommodation Needs

Caregivers should notify the office if they need leave, schedule adjustment, work restriction review, or a reasonable accommodation related to pregnancy, disability, medical condition, injury, religion, military status, domestic violence-related needs, or another legally protected reason.

Stride HealthCare will review requests according to applicable law, participant safety, service needs, and company operations.

4.11 Emergency Scheduling

Home care requires planning for weather, disasters, emergencies, call-outs, participant changes, caregiver illness, and other unexpected events.

Stride HealthCare may contact caregivers about emergency scheduling needs, backup coverage, urgent shift changes, or participant safety concerns.

Caregivers are expected to respond to urgent scheduling communication as soon as reasonably possible.

Emergency scheduling may occur because of:

- Caregiver call-outs.

- Participant safety needs.
- Weather events.
- Natural disasters.
- Power outages.
- Emergency room or hospital events.
- Family emergencies.
- Participant condition changes.
- Staffing shortages.
- Transportation problems.
- Service plan or authorization changes.
- Other operational needs.

Caregivers must not place themselves in unsafe conditions. If travel is unsafe, the caregiver must contact the office as soon as possible and follow instructions.

If a caregiver is already with a participant during an emergency, the caregiver must:

- Remain calm.
- Call 911 when there is an immediate danger or medical emergency.
- Notify the office as soon as safely possible.
- Follow emergency instructions from first responders, the office, or authorized parties.
- Do not abandon the participant.
- Clock out when authorized care ends or as instructed by the office.
- Document the event as instructed.

During severe weather, disasters, or community emergencies, Stride HealthCare may adjust schedules, arrange backup coverage, prioritize participant safety needs, and provide instructions to caregivers.

Failure to follow emergency scheduling instructions may result in corrective action unless the caregiver had a legitimate safety, legal, medical, or emergency reason.

Section 5: Payroll

5.1 Payday

Stride HealthCare pays caregivers on a regular payroll schedule.

Stride HealthCare's standard payday is Friday. Pay is issued for the prior pay period after time, documentation, and payroll records are reviewed.

Caregivers are responsible for making sure all time worked is accurately recorded, submitted, and corrected before payroll is processed. Payroll cannot be processed accurately if clock-in, clock-out, Electronic Visit Verification, task documentation, or manual correction information is missing, late, incomplete, or inaccurate.

If a payday falls on a bank holiday, office closure, processing delay, or other event that affects normal payroll timing, payment may be issued or posted according to banking rules, payroll processor timing, and applicable law.

Caregivers must understand that bank posting times may vary. Stride HealthCare controls when payroll is submitted, but the caregiver's bank or financial institution controls when funds are made available after payroll is transmitted.

Caregivers should contact the office if they believe there is an error with their pay. Payroll questions should be reported as soon as possible so the issue can be reviewed.

5.2 Electronic Payroll

Stride HealthCare uses electronic payroll as its standard payroll method.

Caregivers are expected to use the payroll method approved by Stride HealthCare, which may include direct deposit, payroll card, or another lawful electronic payroll option offered by the company.

Caregivers must provide accurate payroll information before payroll can be processed. This may include bank account information, routing number, payroll card information, tax forms, legal name, address, and other required payroll information.

Caregivers are responsible for making sure their payroll information is correct and current.

Stride HealthCare is not responsible for delays, rejected deposits, returned payments, overdraft fees, bank holds, account freezes, closed accounts, incorrect account numbers, or other issues caused by inaccurate, outdated, or unavailable banking information provided by the caregiver.

If a caregiver changes banks, closes an account, loses access to an account, changes payroll cards, or needs to update payroll delivery information, the caregiver must notify the office before payroll is processed. Changes may not take effect immediately if payroll has already been submitted.

Caregivers should not share payroll login information, banking information, or payroll account access with unauthorized persons.

5.3 Payroll Information

Caregivers must keep all payroll, tax, and employee information accurate and up to date.

This includes:

- Legal name.
- Address.
- Phone number.
- Email address.
- Social Security number or other required tax information.
- Tax withholding forms.
- Direct deposit or payroll delivery information.
- Emergency contact information.
- Garnishment, child support, levy, or court order information, if applicable.
- Any other information required for payroll, tax reporting, employment records, or legal compliance.

Caregivers are responsible for reviewing their payroll information and pay records. If something appears incorrect, the caregiver must contact the office as soon as possible.

Stride HealthCare may provide access to payroll records, pay statements, tax documents, and other payroll information through QuickBooks Workforce or another company-approved payroll system.

Caregivers are responsible for setting up and maintaining access to their payroll account when required. This includes keeping login information secure, checking pay statements, reviewing tax documents, and notifying the office of access problems.

Stride HealthCare does not provide personal tax advice. Caregivers are responsible for choosing their own tax withholding elections and may consult a tax professional if they have questions about tax forms, withholding, or personal tax obligations.

5.4 Payroll Questions

Caregivers should report payroll questions or pay concerns promptly.

Payroll concerns may include:

- Missing hours.
- Incorrect hours.
- Incorrect rate of pay.
- Missing shift.
- Incorrect overtime calculation.
- Missing training time.
- Incorrect deduction.
- Direct deposit issue.
- Payroll account issue.
- Tax withholding question.
- Final pay question.

Caregivers must provide enough information for the office to review the concern. This may include the date of the shift, participant name, scheduled time, actual time worked, clock-in or clock-out issue, EVV issue, documentation issue, training record, or other details.

Stride HealthCare will review payroll concerns and make corrections when appropriate.

Caregivers must not falsify time, exaggerate hours, submit duplicate time, claim time not worked, or

change documentation to create a payroll result that is not accurate.

If a payroll issue is caused by missing documentation, EVV problems, manual time correction needs, or late information, the caregiver must cooperate with the office so the issue can be reviewed.

Payroll corrections may be processed on the next available payroll cycle or sooner if required by law or approved by Stride HealthCare.

5.5 Hours Worked and Overtime

Caregivers must accurately report all hours worked.

Hours worked means time the caregiver is required, allowed, or directed to work for Stride HealthCare. This may include authorized participant care, required training, required meetings, required documentation time, required travel during the workday, approved administrative time, or other work time approved or allowed by Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers must not work off the clock.

Caregivers must not:

- Begin work before clocking in.
- Continue working after clocking out.
- Work through unpaid time without reporting it.
- Complete documentation off the clock unless instructed otherwise by the office.
- Attend required training without reporting the time as instructed.
- Transport, escort, or assist a participant without recording time as instructed.
- Stay after a shift performing work without approval.
- Allow another person to clock in or out for them.
- Clock in when they are not working.
- Report time for services not provided.
- Alter time records without approval.

Stride HealthCare's standard workweek is used to calculate overtime. Caregivers will be paid overtime when required by law. Overtime generally applies

to hours worked over 40 in a workweek for non-exempt employees.

Overtime must be approved in advance whenever possible. Caregivers must not accept shifts, extend shifts, remain with a participant, attend work activities, or perform extra work that will create overtime unless the office approves it.

If a caregiver works overtime without approval, the caregiver must still accurately report all time worked. Unauthorized overtime may result in corrective action, but Stride HealthCare will not allow caregivers to hide, delete, or fail to report hours actually worked.

Caregivers must contact the office before working beyond the scheduled shift unless an emergency requires immediate action. If an emergency requires the caregiver to stay longer, the caregiver must contact the office as soon as safely possible.

Caregivers may not volunteer unpaid time to perform caregiver duties for a participant assigned through Stride HealthCare. Work performed for Stride HealthCare must be reported.

5.6 Deductions and Final Pay

Stride HealthCare will make required payroll deductions and authorized deductions as allowed by law.

Required deductions may include taxes, garnishments, child support, levies, court orders, or other deductions required by law.

Authorized deductions may include deductions the caregiver has approved in writing or deductions allowed by company policy and applicable law.

Stride HealthCare will provide wage and deduction information through pay statements or other payroll records as required.

Caregivers must review their pay statements and report questions promptly. If a caregiver believes a deduction is incorrect, the caregiver should contact the office as soon as possible.

Caregivers may be responsible for returning company property, identification badges, equipment, documents, devices, uniforms, keys, access cards, or other company materials upon separation or upon request.

Stride HealthCare may not withhold wages in a way that violates applicable wage law. Any deduction, repayment, or recovery of company property will be handled according to company policy and applicable law.

Final Pay

When employment ends for any reason, Stride HealthCare will issue final pay according to applicable law.

Final pay may include wages owed for hours actually worked through the last day of employment. Final pay does not include pay for hours not worked unless required by law or approved in writing by Stride HealthCare.

Before final pay is processed, caregivers are expected to complete all required timekeeping, EVV, documentation, and separation responsibilities.

If final time records are missing, incomplete, or disputed, Stride HealthCare will review the records and make corrections as appropriate.

Caregivers must return company property and cooperate with separation procedures. Failure to return company property may result in follow-up action allowed by law, but wages will not be withheld in a way that violates wage payment requirements.

Final pay will be issued through the company's normal payroll process or another lawful method.

Section 6: Conduct

6.1 Code of Conduct

Caregivers are expected to act with professionalism, honesty, respect, and good judgment at all times while working for Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers work in private homes and often support participants during personal, vulnerable, or sensitive moments. Because of this, conduct must be calm, respectful, safe, and appropriate.

Caregivers must:

- Treat participants, families, coworkers, supervisors, and office staff with respect.
- Follow the participant's service plan and assigned tasks.
- Arrive on time and ready to work.
- Stay within the approved caregiver role.
- Protect participant privacy and confidentiality.
- Use Electronic Visit Verification and documentation systems honestly.
- Report concerns, changes, incidents, and unsafe conditions promptly.
- Communicate professionally with the office.
- Follow all company policies and instructions.
- Use good judgment in the home and community.

Caregivers must not:

- Argue with participants, families, coworkers, office staff, or supervisors.
- Use profanity, insults, threats, or aggressive language.
- Sleep during a shift.
- Ignore participant needs.
- Leave a participant unattended when supervision is required.
- Perform unauthorized or unsafe tasks.
- Falsify time, documentation, training, or incident information.
- Share confidential information.
- Steal, borrow, misuse, or accept participant property inappropriately.
- Work while impaired or unable to safely perform duties.

- Bring unauthorized people, children, pets, or animals to work.
- Use the participant's home, phone, internet, vehicle, supplies, food, or property for personal reasons unless specifically approved.

Caregivers are expected to represent Stride HealthCare in a way that builds trust. Conduct that damages participant safety, participant trust, company reputation, compliance, or service quality may result in coaching, corrective action, removal from assignments, suspension, or termination.

6.2 Professional Boundaries

Caregivers must maintain professional boundaries with participants, families, household members, coworkers, and office staff.

A caregiver's role is to provide approved non-medical care and support according to the participant's service plan. Caregivers may be friendly, kind, and supportive, but they must not create personal, financial, romantic, or dependent relationships with participants or families.

Caregivers must not:

- Become romantically or sexually involved with a participant, family member, or household member.
- Share personal drama, financial problems, relationship issues, or private personal details with participants.
- Ask participants or families for money, gifts, loans, favors, housing, food, transportation, childcare, or personal help.
- Borrow money or property from participants or families.
- Loan money to participants or families.
- Give participants personal gifts that create pressure, obligation, or favoritism.
- Take over participant decision-making.
- Make promises to participants or families that Stride HealthCare has not approved.
- Share personal social media accounts with participants or families for work-related communication.

- Use a participant relationship to gain personal benefit.
- Provide private services outside Stride HealthCare to a participant assigned through Stride HealthCare.
- Discuss personal opinions about another caregiver, office employee, participant, family member, provider, case manager, or agency.

Caregivers must contact the office if a participant or family member asks for something that feels personal, financial, romantic, inappropriate, unsafe, or outside the service plan.

Professional boundaries protect the participant, the caregiver, and Stride HealthCare. Boundary violations may result in removal from the assignment, corrective action, or termination.

6.3 Respect and Dignity

Caregivers must treat every participant with dignity, patience, privacy, and respect.

Participants have the right to make choices about their lives, routines, preferences, home, personal care, clothing, meals, activities, and daily schedule, as long as those choices do not require the caregiver to perform unsafe, unauthorized, illegal, or prohibited tasks.

Caregivers must:

- Speak to participants respectfully.
- Use the participant's preferred name when appropriate.
- Explain what they are doing before assisting with care.
- Ask permission before touching the participant or their belongings.
- Protect privacy during bathing, dressing, toileting, grooming, and personal care.
- Encourage independence when safe and appropriate.
- Respect the participant's home, culture, beliefs, preferences, and routines.
- Avoid judgmental comments.
- Allow the participant to make choices when possible.

- Report concerns instead of arguing or forcing care.

Caregivers must not:

- Shame, mock, belittle, threaten, or talk down to a participant.
- Treat a participant like a child unless the participant is a child and the interaction is age-appropriate.
- Rush personal care in a way that feels disrespectful or unsafe.
- Ignore the participant's preferences without a safety or service-plan reason.
- Use disrespectful nicknames or labels.
- Discuss the participant's private information in front of others who do not need to know.
- Force a participant to accept care.

If a participant refuses care, the caregiver must respect the refusal, ensure immediate safety as appropriate, and notify the office.

6.4 Communication

Caregivers must communicate clearly, respectfully, and promptly.

Good communication helps protect participant safety, prevent missed care, support accurate documentation, and reduce confusion between caregivers, families, supervisors, and the office.

Caregivers must contact the office when:

- They will be late or cannot work a scheduled shift.
- A participant is unavailable, refuses care, or ends care early.
- A task is unclear or not listed on the service plan.
- A participant's condition, behavior, routine, or environment changes.
- The caregiver feels unsafe.
- A family member gives instructions that conflict with the service plan.
- An incident, fall, injury, emergency, complaint, or unusual event occurs.

- EVV, clock-in, clock-out, or documentation problems occur.
- The caregiver is asked to perform a medical, skilled, unsafe, or unauthorized task.
- The caregiver needs support or clarification.

Caregivers must communicate professionally with participants and families. This means using calm language, listening, avoiding arguments, and not making promises the company has not approved.

Caregivers should not debate company policy, Medicaid rules, service hours, authorization decisions, staffing issues, pay, billing, or office decisions with participants or families. These questions must be referred to the office.

Caregivers must not speak negatively about Stride HealthCare, coworkers, participants, families, case managers, nurses, other agencies, or office staff while working.

Caregivers may not speak on behalf of Stride HealthCare unless authorized.

6.5 Dress and Appearance

Caregivers must report to work clean, neat, and dressed appropriately for home care.

Stride HealthCare's dress and appearance standards are designed to support professionalism, infection control, participant comfort, and caregiver safety.

Caregivers must wear clean scrubs or other company-approved work clothing unless the office approves a different dress requirement for a specific assignment.

Caregivers must:

- Wear clean, neat, and appropriate **scrubs**.
- Wear closed-toe, secure, slip-resistant shoes.
- Keep hair clean and controlled so it does not interfere with care.
- Keep fingernails clean, safe, and appropriate for caregiving tasks.
- Maintain good personal hygiene.

- Avoid strong perfume, cologne, scented lotion, smoke odor, or other strong odors.
- Wear the Stride HealthCare identification badge when required.
- Follow any additional dress instructions for a participant assignment.

Caregivers must not wear:

- Clothing with offensive language, graphics, or images.
- Clothing that is revealing, unsafe, excessively tight, excessively loose, or inappropriate for care.
- Open-toe shoes, flip-flops, slippers, or unsafe footwear.
- Excessive jewelry that may interfere with care or create a safety risk.
- Facial jewelry or accessories that create a safety, infection control, or professional concern.
- Clothing that appears dirty, heavily wrinkled, torn, stained, or unprofessional.

Stride HealthCare may require a caregiver to correct dress or appearance concerns before working a shift. Repeated dress code violations may result in corrective action.

6.6 Cell Phone Use

Caregivers must use cell phones responsibly during shifts.

Cell phones may be needed for EVV, communication with the office, emergency contact, scheduling updates, GPS/location functions required for work, and documentation support. However, personal phone use must not interfere with participant care, safety, professionalism, or attention to assigned tasks.

Caregivers may use their phones during a shift for:

- Clocking in or clocking out.
- Contacting the office.
- Reporting a concern.
- Receiving work-related instructions.
- Emergency communication.

- Required documentation or scheduling tasks.
- Calling 911 or emergency services when needed.

Caregivers must not use cell phones during shifts for excessive personal calls, texting, social media, videos, games, shopping, entertainment, personal business, or other non-work activities that distract from participant care.

Caregivers must not:

- Take photos or videos of a participant without company authorization.
- Record a participant, family member, household member, coworker, or office call without authorization.
- Post about participants, families, homes, schedules, or company matters on social media.
- Use earbuds or headphones in a way that prevents safe awareness.
- Ignore participant needs because of phone use.
- Use the participant's phone, charger, Wi-Fi, internet, or device without permission and a work-related reason.

If a caregiver needs to handle an urgent personal matter during a shift, the caregiver must keep it brief, make sure the participant is safe, and contact the office if the matter affects the shift.

6.7 Visitors, Children, and Pets

Caregivers may not bring visitors, children, family members, friends, pets, or unauthorized persons to work.

This rule applies to participant homes, community errands, transportation, training, meetings, and any other work-related activity unless Stride HealthCare gives written approval.

Caregivers must not:

- Bring a child to a participant's home.
- Leave a child in a vehicle while working.
- Bring a friend, spouse, partner, relative, or other person to a shift.

- Allow another person to enter a participant's home during the shift unless that person is authorized.
- Bring pets or animals to a shift.
- Leave a pet or animal in a vehicle while working.
- Ask a participant or family to allow an unauthorized person or animal on the property.
- Have personal visitors stop by during a shift.

Unauthorized visitors create safety, privacy, liability, and professionalism concerns. Participants and families may not approve exceptions on behalf of Stride HealthCare.

If a caregiver has a childcare, transportation, pet care, or personal emergency that affects the ability to work, the caregiver must contact the office before the shift or as soon as safely possible.

Any request for a disability-related accommodation involving an animal or other support must be reviewed through Stride HealthCare before the caregiver reports to a participant's home. Caregivers may not make their own accommodation arrangements directly with participants or families.

Violation of this policy may result in immediate removal from the shift, corrective action, or termination.

6.8 Gifts, Money, and Property

Caregivers must maintain strict boundaries involving gifts, tips, money, property, and personal belongings.

Caregivers may not use the caregiver-participant relationship for personal financial benefit.

Caregivers must not:

- Ask participants or families for money, gifts, tips, loans, food, gas money, favors, or personal help.
- Borrow money from participants or families.
- Loan money to participants or families.

- Accept large gifts, expensive items, cash, gift cards, property, or anything of significant value.
- Sell items or services to participants or families.
- Buy items from participants or families unless approved by the office.
- Use participant credit cards, debit cards, checks, bank accounts, benefits cards, or cash except as specifically authorized for approved tasks.
- Keep participant change, receipts, cards, keys, documents, or property.
- Use participant property for personal reasons.
- Accept being named in a participant's will, power of attorney, bank account, insurance policy, deed, title, or other legal or financial arrangement.
- Sign legal, financial, medical, or personal documents for a participant unless specifically authorized by the office and allowed by law.

Small gestures such as a reasonable snack or drink offered during a shift may be acceptable if they are occasional, modest, and do not create pressure or obligation. When in doubt, the caregiver must decline and contact the office.

If a participant insists on giving a caregiver money, a gift, property, or anything of value, the caregiver must politely decline and notify the office.

6.9 Theft and Exploitation

Theft, misuse of property, fraud, and exploitation are strictly prohibited.

Caregivers work in private homes and may have access to personal spaces, valuables, money, medication, documents, mail, electronics, keys, vehicles, and other property. This access requires honesty, restraint, and accountability.

Caregivers must not:

- Take money, medication, food, property, documents, clothing, jewelry, electronics, or supplies.
- Use participant property without permission and a work-related reason.

- Use participant credit cards, debit cards, checks, bank cards, benefits cards, online accounts, or cash for personal reasons.
- Keep participant change or receipts.
- Access participant mail, financial records, personal documents, phones, computers, tablets, or accounts unless the service plan and office authorize assistance.
- Pressure, influence, manipulate, or persuade a participant to give money, gifts, property, access, passwords, legal authority, or personal benefit.
- Use a participant's vulnerability, disability, memory loss, confusion, loneliness, or dependence for personal gain.
- Hide, alter, or destroy documentation related to money, property, errands, receipts, incidents, or concerns.
- Allow another person to misuse participant property.

Caregivers must immediately report suspected theft, exploitation, missing property, financial abuse, unusual transactions, or concerns involving participant money or belongings.

Stride HealthCare may investigate concerns involving theft, exploitation, property misuse, or financial misconduct. The company may remove the caregiver from assignments during review.

Confirmed theft, exploitation, fraud, or intentional misuse of participant property may result in termination and may be reported to law enforcement, Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services, Medicaid, licensing authorities, or other appropriate agencies.

6.10 Conflicts and Solicitation

Caregivers must avoid conflicts of interest, solicitation, and private arrangements that interfere with Stride HealthCare's services, participants, employees, or business relationships.

A conflict of interest occurs when a caregiver's personal, financial, family, outside employment, or business interest could affect the caregiver's

judgment, loyalty, availability, professionalism, or ability to perform duties for Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers must disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest to the office.

Examples may include:

- A personal or family relationship with a participant.
- Working for another agency that serves the same participant.
- Attempting to move a participant from Stride HealthCare to another provider.
- Accepting private pay directly from a participant or family for services connected to Stride HealthCare.
- Recruiting Stride HealthCare caregivers for another agency or private arrangement.
- Using company information for personal business or another employer.
- Discussing participant schedules, caregiver lists, service hours, rates, or internal operations with competitors or unauthorized persons.
- Working private hours for a participant assigned through Stride HealthCare without office approval.

Caregivers may not solicit, encourage, pressure, or assist a participant, family member, caregiver, or employee to leave Stride HealthCare, reduce services with Stride HealthCare, transfer to another provider, or enter a private care arrangement that bypasses Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers may not use Stride HealthCare confidential information for personal benefit or for the benefit of another company, person, or provider.

Confidential company information may include:

- Participant names.
- Participant addresses.
- Participant schedules.
- Service authorizations.
- Care plans.
- Caregiver lists.

- Employee contact information.
- Pay rates.
- Billing information.
- Business plans.
- Referral sources.
- Internal forms.
- Training materials.
- Policies and procedures.
- EVV, documentation, and operational processes.
- Any non-public business information learned through employment.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent caregivers from discussing wages or working conditions as protected by law, reporting legal concerns, cooperating with government agencies, or exercising legally protected rights.

Violations of this policy may result in removal from assignments, corrective action, termination, and any other action allowed by law.

6.11 Violence and Weapons

Stride HealthCare is committed to maintaining a safe work environment.

Violence, threats, intimidation, harassment, weapons misuse, and unsafe behavior are not allowed while working, representing the company, communicating with participants or staff, attending training, transporting participants, or performing company-related duties.

Caregivers must not:

- Threaten, hit, shove, grab, intimidate, or physically harm another person.
- Use aggressive, hostile, or threatening language.
- Engage in bullying, stalking, harassment, or intimidation.
- Damage participant, family, company, coworker, or household property.
- Bring weapons into a participant's home or work location.

- Carry, display, use, or store a weapon while providing services or transporting a participant.
- Use any object in a threatening or unsafe manner.
- Make jokes or comments about harming someone.
- Retaliate against someone who reports a safety concern.

Weapons include firearms, knives, explosives, tasers, stun guns, chemical sprays, clubs, or any other item used or intended to be used as a weapon.

If a caregiver feels unsafe, sees a weapon, is threatened, witnesses violence, or believes there is immediate danger, the caregiver must call 911 when appropriate and contact the office as soon as safely possible.

Caregivers must not attempt to physically intervene in a dangerous situation unless necessary to escape immediate harm.

Stride HealthCare may remove a caregiver from an assignment or refuse service in situations involving violence, threats, weapons, unsafe household behavior, or other safety risks.

Violation of this policy may result in immediate removal from shifts, corrective action, termination, and reporting to law enforcement or other appropriate authorities.

6.12 Drugs, Alcohol, and Impairment

Caregivers must report to work sober, alert, and able to safely perform assigned duties.

Caregivers may not work while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, marijuana, controlled substances, misused prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, fatigue, or any other condition that affects judgment, coordination, alertness, behavior, or safety.

Caregivers must not:

- Use alcohol or illegal drugs while working.

- Report to work under the influence.
- Possess, sell, distribute, transfer, or use illegal drugs while working.
- Misuse prescription medication while working.
- Use medication in a way that affects safe work performance.
- Smoke, vape, or use tobacco products in a participant's home, vehicle, or during participant care.
- Transport a participant while impaired.
- Attend training or company meetings while impaired.
- Ignore medication side effects that may affect safe caregiving.

Prescription and over-the-counter medication must be used only as legally prescribed or directed. If medication may affect the caregiver's ability to safely work, drive, lift, transfer, communicate, document, or respond to emergencies, the caregiver must notify the office before working.

Caregivers are not required to share unnecessary private medical details, but they must provide enough information for Stride HealthCare to evaluate work restrictions, safety concerns, fitness for duty, or accommodation needs.

Stride HealthCare may require drug or alcohol testing as allowed by law, licensing standards, Medicaid requirements, or company policy. Refusing a required test, delaying a test, tampering with a test, or failing to cooperate with testing may result in removal from assignments and corrective action up to termination.

A caregiver who appears impaired may be removed from a shift, sent home, required to obtain transportation, required to provide documentation, referred for testing, suspended, or terminated depending on the situation.

Participant safety comes first. A caregiver must never work while impaired or unsafe.

Section 7: Privacy

7.1 Confidentiality

Caregivers must protect participant privacy and confidentiality at all times.

Caregivers may learn private information about a participant's health, disability, services, home, family, finances, routines, habits, medications, personal care needs, schedule, address, phone number, case manager, Medicaid status, or other personal matters. This information is confidential.

Confidential information must only be used for approved work-related purposes. Caregivers may only access, use, discuss, or share participant information when it is needed to perform assigned duties, follow the service plan, report concerns, document care, or communicate with authorized Stride HealthCare staff.

Caregivers must not:

- Discuss participant information with unauthorized people.
- Discuss participant information in public places.
- Share participant information with friends, family, other participants, or other caregivers who are not involved in the participant's care.
- Share participant information on social media.
- Take or share photos, videos, or recordings of participants.
- Use participant information for personal reasons.
- Look through participant documents, mail, phone, tablet, computer, cabinets, drawers, or personal records unless authorized for an assigned task.
- Leave participant paperwork, notes, schedules, or documents where others can see them.
- Tell another person where a participant lives, when services occur, or who provides care.
- Discuss participant care with another agency, provider, family member, case manager, or third party unless authorized by Stride HealthCare.

Confidentiality applies during employment and continues after employment ends.

A caregiver who violates confidentiality may be removed from assignments, disciplined, terminated, and may be reported to appropriate agencies when required.

7.2 HIPAA Expectations

Stride HealthCare expects caregivers to follow HIPAA privacy standards and company privacy policies when handling participant information.

HIPAA is a federal law that protects certain health information and limits how protected information may be used or disclosed. In home care, protected information may include a participant's name, address, phone number, Medicaid status, care needs, diagnosis information, service schedule, medications, health condition, personal care needs, case management information, and other information connected to the participant's care.

Caregivers must use the minimum amount of information needed to complete the work-related purpose. This means caregivers should not access, discuss, copy, text, photograph, share, or request more participant information than needed to do their job.

Caregivers may use participant information only to:

- Provide assigned care.
- Follow the service plan.
- Complete required documentation.
- Report changes or concerns.
- Communicate with the office.
- Support participant safety.
- Follow company policy.
- Comply with legal, Medicaid, licensing, or reporting requirements.

Caregivers must not share participant information because someone is curious, because a family member asks, because another caregiver asks without a need to know, or because the caregiver believes the information is harmless.

If someone asks for participant information and the caregiver is unsure whether the person is authorized to receive it, the caregiver must not

provide the information. The caregiver must contact the office for guidance.

A caregiver must immediately report any suspected privacy mistake, unauthorized disclosure, lost document, wrong text message, wrong recipient, missing paperwork, unauthorized photo, or other privacy concern to the office.

7.3 Participant Conversations

Caregivers must be careful when talking about participants.

Participant conversations should be private, respectful, and limited to what is needed for care, safety, documentation, or approved communication.

Caregivers must not discuss participant information:

- In public places.
- In restaurants, stores, waiting rooms, elevators, hallways, parking lots, or common areas.
- Around friends, family, neighbors, or unauthorized persons.
- With another participant.
- With another caregiver who is not involved in the participant's care.
- With a participant's family member unless the office has confirmed the person is authorized and the information is appropriate to share.
- On speakerphone where others can hear.
- Through personal social media, group chats, or public messaging platforms.

Caregivers must use respectful language when speaking about participants. Even when a participant is difficult, upset, confused, or refusing care, the caregiver must not gossip, mock, complain publicly, or speak about the participant in a disrespectful way.

Caregivers should not discuss:

- Participant diagnoses.
- Medications.
- Personal care needs.

- Hygiene issues.
- Toileting or incontinence.
- Mental health concerns.
- Behavior concerns.
- Family conflict.
- Financial matters.
- Home conditions.
- Service hours.
- Medicaid status.
- Case manager information.
- Private conversations.
- Anything the participant would reasonably expect to remain private.

If a participant or family member asks about Medicaid hours, authorization decisions, other caregivers, staffing concerns, billing, company decisions, or another participant, the caregiver must refer the person to the office.

7.4 Photos, Videos, and Social Media

Caregivers may not take, record, post, send, or share photos, videos, audio recordings, screenshots, or social media content involving participants, participant homes, participant property, participant documents, participant schedules, or participant care unless Stride HealthCare gives specific authorization.

This rule applies even if the participant or family says it is okay. Caregivers must receive approval from Stride HealthCare before taking or sharing any image, video, recording, or post connected to a participant or participant service.

Caregivers must not:

- Take selfies with participants.
- Photograph participants.
- Record participants.
- Record participant homes.
- Take pictures of participant paperwork.
- Take pictures of medications, medical equipment, service plans, schedules, or task lists.
- Post about a participant on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, X, YouTube,

- LinkedIn, group chats, forums, or any other platform.
- Share participant stories online.
- Share participant information in private messages.
- Post complaints about participants, families, coworkers, or Stride HealthCare.
- Use hashtags, initials, nicknames, locations, or details that could identify a participant.
- Record phone calls, office calls, participant conversations, or family conversations unless authorized by the office and allowed by law.

Caregivers also must not post content that appears to be about a participant even if the participant's name is not used. If someone could reasonably identify the participant from the details, it is not allowed.

Examples of prohibited posts include:

- "My participant refused a bath again today."
- "This family never cleans the house."
- "Working with dementia is exhausting."
- "At my shift in Easley with my favorite lady."
- A picture of a participant's living room, wheelchair, medication bottles, schedule, or service paperwork.
- A video recorded inside a participant's home.
- A photo in uniform showing a participant's home or address in the background.

Caregivers may not use participant information, participant images, or participant stories for personal content, marketing, fundraising, personal branding, humor, education, or training unless Stride HealthCare gives written authorization and all required permissions are completed.

Violation of this policy may result in immediate removal from assignment, corrective action, termination, and reporting when required.

7.5 Participant Information

Caregivers must protect all forms of participant information.

Participant information may be written, spoken, electronic, printed, texted, photographed, stored in an app, included in EVV, included in a service plan, included in notes, or learned through conversation.

Participant information includes:

- Name.
- Address.
- Phone number.
- Date of birth.
- Medicaid or insurance information.
- Service schedule.
- Service authorization.
- Service plan.
- Task list.
- Case manager or care coordinator information.
- Health condition.
- Disability information.
- Medication information.
- Personal care needs.
- Toileting, bathing, grooming, dressing, or hygiene needs.
- Behavioral concerns.
- Family information.
- Financial information.
- Home access information.
- Door codes, keys, lockbox codes, or alarm codes.
- Transportation details.
- Incident reports.
- Complaints or concerns.
- Any other private information learned through work.

Caregivers must keep participant information secure.

Caregivers must:

- Keep paperwork with them or in a secure location.
- Avoid leaving participant information visible in vehicles, homes, stores, restaurants, or public areas.
- Avoid texting participant information unless using an approved method or instructed by the office.

- Send information only to the correct office contact or approved system.
- Double-check recipients before sending messages.
- Use only company-approved systems when required.
- Keep phones and devices locked.
- Protect passwords and login information.
- Report lost, stolen, or misdirected information immediately.
- Return or destroy participant information only as instructed by Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers must not keep personal copies of participant documents, photos, schedules, service plans, or private information after the information is no longer needed for work.

Caregivers must not store participant information on personal devices, cloud accounts, personal email, personal notes apps, camera rolls, or personal file storage unless Stride HealthCare specifically authorizes it.

If a caregiver receives participant information by mistake, sends information to the wrong person, loses paperwork, loses a phone containing participant information, or believes someone else accessed participant information, the caregiver must report it immediately.

7.6 Privacy Concerns

Caregivers must report privacy concerns immediately.

A privacy concern may include any situation where participant information may have been accessed, used, shared, lost, exposed, viewed, sent, posted, photographed, recorded, or discussed in a way that was not authorized.

Examples of privacy concerns include:

- Texting participant information to the wrong person.
- Leaving participant paperwork in a vehicle or public place.

- Losing a phone that contains participant information.
- Taking or sharing an unauthorized photo.
- Posting about a participant on social media.
- Discussing a participant in public.
- Giving information to an unauthorized family member.
- Sending participant information through personal email.
- Leaving a voicemail with private information for the wrong person.
- A participant's document being seen by another participant.
- A caregiver using another person's EVV or documentation login.
- A caregiver sharing passwords or login information.
- A caregiver keeping participant information after separation from employment.
- Any other situation that may expose participant information.

Caregivers must not try to hide, delete, cover up, or fix a privacy concern without notifying the office. Fast reporting helps Stride HealthCare protect the participant, review what happened, reduce risk, and complete any required follow-up.

When reporting a privacy concern, the caregiver should provide:

- What happened.
- When it happened.
- Whose information was involved.
- Who may have seen or received the information.
- What type of information was involved.
- Whether the information was recovered, deleted, or still exposed.
- Any steps already taken.
- Any screenshots, messages, or details needed for review.

Stride HealthCare will review privacy concerns and take appropriate action. Depending on the situation, this may include participant notification, system correction, documentation, retraining, corrective

action, termination, or reporting to appropriate agencies.

Retaliation against anyone who reports a privacy concern in good faith is not allowed.

Section 8: Scope of Care

8.1 Non-Medical Care

Stride HealthCare provides non-medical in-home care.

Caregivers do not provide skilled nursing care, medical care, therapy, diagnosis, treatment, medication administration, wound care, injections, medical procedures, or any service that requires a licensed healthcare professional.

Caregivers may assist participants with approved non-medical tasks that are listed in the participant's service plan, authorization, care instructions, or company-approved task list.

Caregivers must stay within their role at all times.

Caregivers must not:

- Diagnose a condition.
- Treat a medical condition.
- Make medical decisions.
- Give medical advice.
- Perform skilled nursing tasks.
- Administer medication.
- Change wound dressings.
- Perform catheter care.
- Perform feeding tube care.
- Provide tracheostomy care.
- Give injections.
- Perform blood sugar testing unless specifically authorized by company policy and allowed by law.
- Adjust oxygen, medical equipment, or medical devices.
- Perform a task that has not been approved by Stride HealthCare.

If a participant, family member, or other person asks the caregiver to perform a medical, skilled, unsafe, or unauthorized task, the caregiver must politely decline and contact the office.

Caregivers should use this rule: **if the task feels medical, skilled, unsafe, unclear, or outside the service plan, stop and call the office.**

8.2 Service Plan

Caregivers must follow the participant's service plan and assigned task list.

The service plan tells Stride HealthCare what services are authorized, how often services may be provided, how long services may be provided, and what needs the participant has. The caregiver's task list explains what the caregiver is expected to do during the shift.

Caregivers may only provide services that are:

- Approved by Stride HealthCare.
- Listed in the service plan, authorization, task list, or office instructions.
- Within the caregiver's non-medical scope.
- Safe for the caregiver to perform.
- Appropriate for the participant's needs.
- Within the scheduled and authorized time.

Caregivers must not add tasks, change tasks, remove tasks, extend services, shorten services, or change the schedule without office approval.

Participants and families may request help with many things. Not every request is allowed. A caregiver must contact the office before performing a task that is not listed, unclear, unsafe, medical, skilled, personal to another household member, or outside the approved service plan.

If the caregiver believes a participant needs a new or different task, the caregiver should notify the office. The office will review the concern and determine whether the service plan, authorization, or task list needs to be updated.

Caregivers may not discuss, negotiate, promise, or explain Medicaid-authorized hours or service levels to participants or families unless directed by the office. Questions about service hours, authorizations, case management decisions, or service changes must be referred to the office.

8.3 Personal Care

Personal Care services support participants with daily living and home support needs according to the participant's approved service plan.

Personal Care may include approved assistance with:

- Eating.
- Bathing.
- Personal grooming.
- Dressing.
- Personal hygiene.
- Skin care such as applying non-medicated lotion or oil.
- Meal planning and preparation.
- Getting in and out of bed.
- Repositioning.
- Ambulation.
- Toileting and continence support.
- Cleaning.
- Laundry.
- Shopping.
- Home safety.
- Errands.
- Family-type monitoring of condition.
- Medication reminders.
- Handing a medication container to the participant.
- Escort or transportation when approved.
- Strength and balance support.
- Limited financial assistance with receipts.
- Communication assistance.

Caregivers must provide Personal Care in a way that protects dignity, privacy, safety, and participant choice.

Personal Care does not allow the caregiver to perform medical or skilled tasks. Even if the participant or family requests it, the caregiver must not perform a task outside Stride HealthCare's approved non-medical scope.

If the participant needs help that is not listed on the task list, the caregiver must contact the office.

8.4 Children's Personal Care

Children's Personal Care services support eligible participants from age 1 through 21 with approved daily living needs.

Children's Personal Care must be provided according to the child's service plan, authorization, task list, and company instructions. Caregivers must follow all child-specific safety rules and must not assume that adult Personal Care rules apply the same way to children.

Children's Personal Care may include approved assistance with:

- Bathing.
- Dressing.
- Eating.
- Hygiene.
- Mobility.
- Toileting.
- Transferring.
- Age-appropriate home support when allowed.
- Monitoring condition in a family-type way.
- Medication reminders.
- Handing a medication container to the participant when appropriate.
- Escort to approved Medicaid-covered services when allowed.
- Transportation only when specifically approved and permitted.
- Strength and balance support.
- Limited age-appropriate financial assistance when allowed.
- Communication assistance when age appropriate.

Caregivers assigned to Children's Personal Care must understand that children may have different safety, supervision, developmental, behavioral, and family involvement needs.

Caregivers must not provide skilled care under a Children's Personal Care authorization. This includes medical procedures, feeding tube care, tracheostomy care, ventilator care, injections, wound care, medication administration, or any skilled task unless Stride HealthCare confirms that

the task is allowed and properly authorized under a different service arrangement.

For participants under age 18, special rules may apply to escorting, transportation, parent or guardian involvement, and community activities. Caregivers must follow office instructions exactly.

If a child's condition changes, the child has a medical concern, the parent or guardian requests an unauthorized task, or the caregiver is unsure what is allowed, the caregiver must stop and call the office.

8.5 Companion Care

Companion Care is different from Personal Care.

Companion Care focuses on supervision, socialization, support, and maintaining a safe, clean environment. Companion Care does not include hands-on personal care or skilled medical care.

Companion Care may include approved assistance with:

- Conversation.
- Reading.
- Social interaction.
- Assistance with mail.
- Meal or snack preparation assistance or supervision.
- Laundry assistance or supervision.
- Shopping assistance or supervision.
- Incidental light housekeeping.
- Sitting service.
- Supervision.
- Orientation to daily events.
- Making appropriate contact in case of emergency.
- Escort or offsite support when approved.

Companions must not provide hands-on care unless Stride HealthCare has assigned the caregiver under a service that allows hands-on care.

Under Companion Care, caregivers must not:

- Bathe the participant.
- Dress the participant.
- Transfer the participant.
- Toilet the participant.
- Provide incontinence care.
- Feed the participant by hand.
- Perform hands-on mobility assistance.
- Provide skilled medical care.
- Administer medication.
- Perform any medical procedure.

If a participant receiving Companion Care needs hands-on assistance, the caregiver must contact the office. The caregiver must not perform the task unless the office confirms the caregiver is authorized under the correct service and task list.

8.6 Daily Living Assistance

Daily living assistance means helping a participant with routine personal care needs that the participant needs support completing safely and respectfully.

Daily living assistance may include approved help with:

- Eating.
- Bathing.
- Dressing.
- Grooming.
- Personal hygiene.
- Skin care.
- Toileting.
- Continence support.
- Ambulation.
- Getting in and out of bed.
- Repositioning.
- Transfers when approved and safe.

Caregivers must provide daily living assistance in a way that protects the participant's dignity and privacy.

Caregivers must:

- Explain what they are doing before assisting.

- Ask permission before touching the participant.
- Encourage the participant to do what they can safely do independently.
- Use safe body mechanics.
- Follow infection control practices.
- Respect modesty during personal care.
- Follow the task list.
- Stop if the participant refuses.
- Report changes, pain, skin concerns, falls, weakness, confusion, or other safety concerns.

Caregivers must not force care. If a participant refuses bathing, dressing, toileting, meals, repositioning, or another task, the caregiver must respect the refusal, make sure the participant is safe as appropriate, document as instructed, and notify the office.

Caregivers must not perform transfers, lifting, repositioning, or mobility support that is unsafe, requires more than one person when only one person is approved, requires equipment the caregiver has not been trained to use, or goes beyond the service plan.

8.7 Home Support

Home support means approved non-medical household tasks that help the participant remain safe and supported in the home.

Home support may include approved assistance with:

- Cleaning.
- Laundry.
- Shopping.
- Meal planning.
- Meal preparation.
- Home safety.
- Errands.
- Participant-related household tasks.

Home support is for the participant's needs. Caregivers are not assigned to provide general household labor for the entire household unless the task is clearly approved by Stride HealthCare and connected to the participant's service plan.

Caregivers may assist with reasonable light housekeeping related to the participant's care area, safety, and daily living needs.

Caregivers must not perform unsafe or unrelated household tasks, including:

- Heavy deep cleaning.
- Moving heavy furniture.
- Climbing ladders.
- Yard work.
- Home repairs.
- Pest removal.
- Cleaning up biohazards beyond normal caregiving cleanup.
- Caring for pets.
- Cleaning for other household members unless approved.
- Performing tasks for visitors, relatives, roommates, or neighbors.
- Handling weapons, illegal substances, or unsafe materials.
- Any task that places the caregiver at risk.

If the home is unsafe, unsanitary, infested, hostile, or beyond what a caregiver can safely manage, the caregiver must contact the office.

8.8 Medication and Monitoring Limits

Caregivers may provide medication reminders only when allowed by the participant's service plan, task list, and company policy.

A medication reminder means reminding the participant that it is time to take medication according to the directions on the container or instructions already provided by the participant's healthcare provider.

A caregiver may be allowed to:

- Remind the participant that it is time to take medication.
- Read the label or written directions to the participant.
- Bring the medication container to the participant.

- Hand the medication container to the participant.
- Observe whether the participant chooses to take the medication.
- Report concerns to the office.

Caregivers must not administer medication.

Caregivers must not:

- Put medication into the participant's mouth.
- Place medication in food or drink.
- Crush, split, mix, prepare, or alter medication.
- Decide which medication the participant should take.
- Decide whether medication should be skipped.
- Remove pills from a pill organizer unless specifically authorized by company policy.
- Fill pill organizers.
- Open capsules.
- Give injections.
- Apply prescription creams, ointments, drops, patches, or medicated products unless specifically authorized by company policy and allowed by law.
- Adjust oxygen or medical equipment.
- Give medical advice about medication.
- Call a pharmacy or provider to make medication decisions unless directed by the office.
- Hide medication, take medication, borrow medication, or dispose of medication unless specifically instructed by the office.

If the participant refuses medication, takes the wrong medication, drops medication, misses medication, appears overmedicated, appears undermedicated, reports side effects, or has a medication emergency, the caregiver must contact the office immediately. If there is an immediate danger or medical emergency, call 911 first.

Monitoring Limits

Caregivers may observe and report basic changes in condition.

When allowed by the service plan or task list, caregivers may provide family-type monitoring such as:

- Observing general condition.
- Noticing changes in behavior.
- Checking or observing temperature.
- Checking pulse rate.
- Observing respiratory rate.
- Reporting concerns to the office.

Caregivers must not interpret vital signs, diagnose a condition, give medical advice, decide treatment, or tell the participant what medical action to take.

Caregivers must report concerning changes to the office, including:

- Trouble breathing.
- Chest pain.
- Sudden weakness.
- New confusion.
- Fainting.
- Fall.
- Severe pain.
- Fever or signs of infection.
- Unusual drowsiness.
- Seizure activity.
- New wound or skin breakdown.
- Sudden behavior change.
- Any condition that seems urgent, unsafe, or unusual.

Call 911 immediately for emergencies.

8.9 Mobility Support

Caregivers may assist with mobility, ambulation, repositioning, transfers, and strength or balance support when the task is approved, safe, and within the caregiver's training.

Mobility support may include:

- Helping a participant walk.
- Assisting with safe movement around the home.
- Supporting use of walkers, canes, rollators, or other approved assistive devices.
- Helping the participant reposition.
- Assisting the participant in and out of bed or a chair when approved.

- Supporting approved strength and balance activities.
- Encouraging safe movement as directed by the service plan.

Caregivers must use safe body mechanics and must not perform unsafe lifting.

Caregivers must not:

- Lift a participant from the floor unless directed by emergency responders or trained and approved by Stride HealthCare.
- Perform a two-person transfer alone.
- Use equipment they have not been trained to use.
- Use broken or unsafe equipment.
- Force a participant to walk, transfer, or exercise.
- Provide physical therapy.
- Create or change an exercise program.
- Perform range-of-motion exercises unless specifically trained and authorized.
- Continue a mobility task when the participant has pain, dizziness, weakness, shortness of breath, or distress.

If a participant falls, the caregiver must not automatically lift the participant. The caregiver must check for immediate danger, call 911 if needed, notify the office, and follow emergency instructions.

If a mobility task feels unsafe, the caregiver must stop and call the office.

8.10 Errands and Receipts

Caregivers may assist with errands, shopping, payments, and receipts only when the task is approved by the service plan, task list, and office instructions.

Errands and financial assistance must be limited, documented, and handled carefully.

Caregivers may be allowed to:

- Pick up groceries.
- Assist with shopping.

- Deliver payment to a designated recipient.
- Return receipts to the participant.
- Assist with participant-related errands.
- Escort the participant to approved activities or appointments when allowed.

Caregivers must protect participant money, cards, receipts, documents, and property.

Caregivers must:

- Use participant funds only for the approved purpose.
- Keep receipts for all purchases.
- Return receipts to the participant.
- Return change immediately.
- Document the errand as instructed.
- Avoid mixing caregiver money with participant money.
- Never use participant funds for personal purchases.
- Never borrow from or lend money to a participant.
- Never use a participant's debit card, credit card, checkbook, benefits card, or account unless specifically authorized by the office and handled according to company instructions.
- Never keep participant money, receipts, cards, or property.

If there is a mistake, missing receipt, missing change, declined card, lost money, suspected theft, dispute, or concern involving participant funds, the caregiver must contact the office immediately.

Caregivers must not make financial decisions for participants or influence how a participant spends money.

8.11 Refusal and Changes

Participants have the right to refuse care.

If a participant refuses a task, the caregiver must respect the refusal, remain calm, and notify the office. The caregiver must not argue, threaten, shame, pressure, or force the participant to accept care.

A refusal may include refusing:

- Bathing.
- Dressing.
- Toileting.
- Meals.
- Medication reminders.
- Walking or transferring.
- Cleaning.
- Laundry.
- Errands.
- Transportation.
- Any other approved task.

When a participant refuses care, the caregiver must:

- Make sure the participant is safe as appropriate.
- Ask respectfully if the participant wants the task later.
- Avoid arguing.
- Notify the office.
- Document the refusal as instructed.
- Follow office instructions.

Caregivers must also report changes in condition, routine, environment, behavior, safety, family situation, or service needs.

Changes that must be reported include:

- Increased weakness.
- Falls or near falls.
- Confusion.
- New or worsening pain.
- Trouble breathing.
- Skin changes or wounds.
- Medication concerns.
- Hospitalization.
- Emergency room visit.
- New equipment.
- Unsafe home conditions.
- Change in caregiver needs.
- Refusing care repeatedly.
- Participant no longer wanting services.
- Participant moving.
- Participant entering a facility.

- Family conflict affecting care.
- Suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Any change that affects safety or the service plan.

Caregivers must not change the service plan on their own. Report the concern and wait for office instructions.

8.12 Prohibited Tasks

Caregivers must not perform tasks outside the approved caregiver role.

Prohibited tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Skilled nursing care.
- Medical treatment.
- Medical advice.
- Medication administration.
- Injections.
- Blood sugar testing unless specifically authorized by company policy and allowed by law.
- Wound care or dressing changes.
- Catheter care.
- Feeding tube care.
- Tracheostomy care.
- Ventilator or respirator care.
- Oxygen adjustment.
- Medical equipment adjustment.
- Physical therapy.
- Occupational therapy.
- Speech therapy.
- Range-of-motion exercises unless specifically authorized and trained.
- Diagnosing symptoms.
- Deciding whether a participant needs medication or treatment.
- Cutting toenails or fingernails when unsafe or medically risky.
- Handling sharp medical instruments.
- Restraining a participant.
- Forcing care.
- Lifting a participant after a fall unless directed by emergency responders or authorized by Stride HealthCare.
- Signing legal, medical, or financial documents for a participant.

- Accepting power of attorney, beneficiary status, inheritance, or financial authority from a participant.
- Using participant money for personal reasons.
- Taking participant property.
- Providing care to anyone not assigned by Stride HealthCare.
- Performing services for family members, visitors, roommates, neighbors, or pets unless specifically approved.
- Performing tasks during unauthorized time.
- Providing services in an unauthorized location.
- Providing services when the participant is admitted to a hospital, nursing facility, institution, or other setting where services are not allowed.
- Providing private care outside Stride HealthCare to a participant assigned through Stride HealthCare.
- Any task the caregiver has not been trained and approved to perform.

If a caregiver is unsure whether a task is prohibited, the caregiver must stop and call the office before performing the task.

8.13 When to Call the Office

Caregivers must contact the office whenever a task, request, situation, or concern is unclear, unsafe, unauthorized, outside the service plan, or outside the caregiver's role.

Caregivers must call the office when:

- The participant asks for a task not on the task list.
- A family member gives different instructions than the service plan.
- The caregiver is asked to perform medical or skilled care.
- The caregiver is asked to administer medication.
- The participant refuses care.
- The participant is not home or unavailable.
- The participant leaves during the shift.
- The participant goes to the hospital or emergency room.

- Emergency Medical Services, police, or fire department respond.
- The participant falls.
- The participant is injured.
- The caregiver is injured.
- The caregiver feels unsafe.
- The home is unsafe.
- Equipment is broken or unsafe.
- A transfer or mobility task feels unsafe.
- A medication concern occurs.
- A privacy concern occurs.
- A participant condition changes.
- Abuse, neglect, or exploitation is suspected.
- Participant money, property, or receipts are involved in a concern.
- EVV or documentation issues occur.
- The caregiver may be late, miss a shift, or need to leave early.
- The caregiver is unsure what to do.

Caregivers must call 911 first when there is an immediate emergency, serious injury, life-threatening concern, fire, violence, severe medical symptom, or immediate danger. After calling 911, the caregiver must contact the office as soon as safely possible.

When in doubt, call the office.

Section 9: EVV & Documentation

9.1 EVV Requirement

Electronic Visit Verification is required for applicable Stride HealthCare services.

Electronic Visit Verification, also called EVV, is the system used to document when a caregiver starts and ends a visit, where the service occurs, who receives the service, who provides the service, and what service is provided.

Stride HealthCare uses AuthentiCare and any other required Medicaid or company system to document and verify services.

Caregivers must use EVV exactly as instructed by Stride HealthCare. EVV is not optional.

Caregivers must:

- Use the required EVV method for each assigned shift.
- Clock in at the beginning of the shift.
- Clock out at the end of the shift.
- Select or confirm the correct participant.
- Select or confirm the correct service.
- Document tasks as required.
- Report EVV issues immediately.
- Follow office instructions for corrections.
- Never ignore EVV requirements.

EVV records must reflect the truth. Caregivers must not clock in, clock out, document tasks, or report time in a way that is false, misleading, late, guessed, copied, or not based on the actual shift.

A caregiver who cannot access EVV, has a phone issue, has a system issue, enters the wrong information, forgets to clock in or out, or sees an error must contact the office immediately.

Failure to follow EVV requirements may result in payroll review, documentation correction, retraining, corrective action, removal from assignments, suspension, or termination.

9.2 Clock-In and Clock-Out

Caregivers must clock in and clock out accurately for every shift.

Clock-in and clock-out times must match the actual time the caregiver begins and ends authorized work for the participant.

Caregivers must clock in only when:

- They are at the correct service location.
- They are ready to begin work.
- The participant is available for services.
- The service is authorized.
- The shift is scheduled or approved by the office.
- The caregiver is the person actually providing the service.

Caregivers must clock out when:

- The scheduled shift ends.
- The participant refuses care.
- The participant leaves the home and services cannot continue.
- The participant is no longer available for services.
- Emergency services, police, or another authorized party takes over.
- The participant is admitted or transferred to a hospital, facility, or other setting where services cannot continue.
- The office instructs the caregiver to clock out.
- Authorized care ends for any reason.

Caregivers must not:

- Clock in before arriving.
- Clock in while driving to the shift.
- Clock in from home.
- Clock in for another caregiver.
- Allow another person to clock in or out for them.
- Stay clocked in when not working.
- Stay clocked in after authorized care ends.
- Clock out after leaving the participant's home unless instructed by the office.
- Change time records without office approval.
- Guess times.

- Falsify times.
- Use EVV to claim services that were not provided.

If a caregiver forgets to clock in or out, the caregiver must contact the office immediately. Waiting until payroll is being processed may delay review and may result in corrective action.

Early End of Care

If the participant's care ends early for any planned or unplanned reason, the caregiver must clock out and contact the office.

This includes situations where:

- The participant leaves the home.
- The participant refuses care.
- A family member takes over care.
- Emergency Medical Services arrives.
- Police or fire department responds.
- The participant goes to the hospital.
- The participant is admitted to a facility.
- The participant is no longer available.
- The participant asks the caregiver to leave.
- The office cancels or ends the shift.

Caregivers must not continue billing, documenting, or remaining clocked in after services are no longer being provided or authorized.

Hospital, ER, and Ambulance Service

If a caregiver is with a participant during an emergency, the caregiver must focus on safety first.

The caregiver must call 911 when needed, follow emergency instructions, and contact the office as soon as safely possible.

If the caregiver transports or accompanies the participant to the emergency room or hospital under approved circumstances, the caregiver may remain clocked in only while providing authorized support and only until the participant is safely transferred to emergency, hospital, or facility staff, unless the office gives different instructions.

Once the participant is admitted, transferred, or placed under the care of another entity, the caregiver must clock out and contact the office.

Caregivers must not remain clocked in after authorized services end.

9.3 Shift Documentation

Caregivers must document each shift accurately, completely, and on time.

Documentation shows what services were provided, supports participant safety, supports supervision, supports Medicaid compliance, and helps the office identify changes or concerns.

Caregiver documentation may include:

- EVV clock-in and clock-out.
- Tasks completed.
- Tasks refused.
- Participant unavailable status.
- Missed visit information.
- Shift notes.
- Changes in condition.
- Safety concerns.
- Incident details.
- Errands and receipts.
- Transportation notes.
- Communication with the office.
- Any other documentation required by Stride HealthCare.

Documentation must be truthful, clear, complete, and based on what actually happened during the shift.

Caregivers must document:

- Care actually provided.
- Tasks actually completed.
- Tasks not completed and why.
- Participant refusals.
- Participant changes or concerns.
- Safety issues.
- Incidents or unusual events.
- Late arrivals, early departures, or schedule changes.

- EVV problems.
- Office instructions received.

Caregivers must not:

- Copy notes from another shift without updating them.
- Document tasks that were not completed.
- Document care before it happens.
- Document care after the fact from memory unless instructed by the office.
- Leave notes blank when documentation is required.
- Use disrespectful language in notes.
- Include personal opinions, gossip, blame, or unnecessary details.
- Alter documentation to avoid questions.
- Ask a participant or family member to sign documentation unless the office specifically instructs it.
- Destroy, hide, or change records without approval.

Documentation must be professional. Notes should be factual and care-related.

Good documentation example:

“Assisted participant with bathing, dressing, meal preparation, and laundry. Participant refused walk due to knee pain. Office notified.”

Poor documentation example:

“Did everything. She was being difficult again.”

Caregivers must report serious issues directly to the office. Writing a concern in a note does not replace calling the office when immediate reporting is required.

9.4 Missed Visits

A missed visit occurs when Stride HealthCare is unable to provide an authorized scheduled service.

An attempted visit occurs when the caregiver arrives at the participant’s home but cannot perform assigned tasks because the participant is not

home, refuses services, is unavailable, or services cannot be provided.

Caregivers must immediately contact the office when a visit is missed, attempted, refused, shortened, cancelled, or cannot be completed.

Caregivers must not simply leave the home or skip the shift without notifying the office.

Examples include:

- Participant is not home.
- Participant does not answer the door.
- Participant refuses services.
- Participant is in the hospital.
- Participant is at an appointment.
- Participant left with family.
- Participant says services are not needed.
- Participant asks the caregiver to leave.
- Unsafe conditions prevent care.
- Caregiver cannot access the home.
- Caregiver cannot provide assigned services.
- The office has not confirmed the shift should continue.

When a missed or attempted visit occurs, the caregiver must:

- Contact the office immediately.
- Follow office instructions.
- Document the situation as instructed.
- Use EVV correctly.
- Not remain clocked in unless the office directs it.
- Not document services that were not provided.
- Not pressure the participant to accept care.
- Not argue with the participant or family.

Repeated missed or attempted visits require additional office follow-up. Caregivers must report these situations quickly so Stride HealthCare can notify the appropriate case manager, care coordinator, waiver case manager, local office, or other required party when required.

Missed visits and attempted visits are compliance issues, not just scheduling issues.

9.5 Time Corrections

A manual time correction may be needed when EVV does not correctly capture the actual shift.

Manual time corrections are not automatic. They must be reviewed by the office and must be supported by accurate information.

A caregiver may need a time correction when:

- The caregiver forgot to clock in.
- The caregiver forgot to clock out.
- EVV was unavailable.
- The phone or system failed.
- The wrong service was selected.
- The wrong participant was selected.
- The wrong time was captured.
- The visit ended early.
- The participant was unavailable.
- The office instructed the caregiver to work a different time.

Caregivers must report EVV and time correction issues immediately.

When requesting a correction, the caregiver must provide:

- Participant name.
- Date of service.
- Scheduled shift time.
- Actual start time.
- Actual end time.
- Reason the correction is needed.
- Services actually provided.
- Any office instruction received.
- Any issue that affected the shift.

Caregivers must not request a correction for time not worked, services not provided, travel time that is not authorized, time after authorized care ended, or time that cannot be truthfully supported.

Submitting a false time correction is considered false documentation and may be treated as time fraud.

9.6 Twelve Strike Policy

Stride HealthCare follows South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Phoenix, AuthentiCare, EVV, claim resolution, and Medicaid documentation requirements.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Twelve Strike Policy is a Medicaid compliance policy connected to EVV, worker documentation, claim resolution, and service verification issues.

The office is responsible for managing claims, resolutions, and formal Medicaid billing processes. Caregivers are responsible for completing EVV and documentation correctly so the office can verify services accurately.

A strike, correction, resolution, denial, or documentation issue may occur when a visit does not meet required EVV, service, timekeeping, authorization, or documentation standards.

Caregiver actions that may contribute to a strike or resolution issue include:

- Failure to clock in.
- Failure to clock out.
- Wrong participant selected.
- Wrong service selected.
- Wrong date or time.
- Missing documentation.
- Inaccurate task documentation.
- Late EVV correction.
- Services documented but not provided.
- Services provided outside the authorized schedule.
- Remaining clocked in after services ended.
- Participant unavailable but not reported.
- Missed visit not documented.
- Manual correction not supported.
- Repeated EVV errors.
- False or misleading documentation.

Not every EVV correction means misconduct occurred. Mistakes can happen. However, repeated avoidable errors, careless documentation, late

reporting, unsupported corrections, or false records are serious compliance concerns.

Caregivers must understand that Medicaid documentation affects:

- Participant service records.
- Company compliance.
- Claim accuracy.
- Audit readiness.
- Service verification.
- Payroll review.
- Continued assignment eligibility.
- Stride HealthCare's ability to remain in good standing.

If a caregiver causes repeated EVV or documentation problems, Stride HealthCare may require retraining, closer review, written correction, removal from certain assignments, suspension, or termination.

Caregivers must cooperate with the office when a visit, correction, resolution, or strike issue is being reviewed.

9.7 Time Fraud

Time fraud and false documentation are strictly prohibited.

Time fraud means reporting, recording, approving, or attempting to receive payment for time that was not actually worked or services that were not actually provided.

False documentation means entering, signing, submitting, changing, or supporting information that is not true, complete, or accurate.

Examples of time fraud or false documentation include:

- Clocking in without being at the participant's home or approved service location.
- Clocking in before services begin.
- Clocking out after services end.
- Staying clocked in while not working.
- Claiming time for a missed visit.

- Claiming time after a participant leaves.
- Claiming time after a participant is admitted to a hospital or facility.
- Reporting tasks that were not completed.
- Reporting care that was not provided.
- Asking someone else to clock in or out.
- Clocking in or out for another caregiver.
- Changing time records to increase pay.
- Submitting false manual correction requests.
- Creating notes after the fact that do not reflect what happened.
- Hiding a missed visit.
- Hiding a participant refusal.
- Hiding an early departure.
- Claiming mileage, errands, transportation, or escort services that were not approved or completed.
- Using EVV from the wrong location.
- Helping another caregiver falsify records.

Time fraud may result in immediate removal from assignments, suspension, termination, repayment review when allowed by law, and reporting to Medicaid, licensing authorities, law enforcement, or other appropriate agencies.

Caregivers must report all hours actually worked. Stride HealthCare will not instruct caregivers to hide time worked. However, unauthorized work, unapproved overtime, false time, unsupported corrections, or work outside the approved service plan may result in corrective action.

9.8 Non-Billable Services

Some time or services cannot be billed to Medicaid.

Caregivers must understand that not every task, request, or period of time is authorized or billable.

Services may be non-billable when:

- The participant is not available.
- The participant refuses care.
- The participant is in a hospital, nursing facility, institution, or other setting where services are not allowed.
- The service is outside the authorization.

- The service is outside the participant's service plan.
- The task is not approved.
- The service is provided before the authorized start date.
- The service is provided after authorization ends.
- The caregiver provides the wrong service type.
- The caregiver provides services to someone other than the assigned participant.
- The caregiver provides private tasks for family members, visitors, roommates, neighbors, or pets.
- The caregiver remains clocked in after authorized services end.
- The service is medical, skilled, unsafe, or prohibited.
- The documentation does not support that services were provided.
- EVV requirements are not met.
- The office determines the service cannot be verified.

Caregivers must not decide on their own whether something is billable. If there is a question, the caregiver must contact the office before performing the task or continuing the shift.

If a service is not billable, the caregiver may still need to report the situation, document accurately, and follow office instructions.

Caregivers are responsible for accurate timekeeping and documentation. The office is responsible for final billing decisions.

9.9 Multiple Participants

When more than one participant lives in the same home, each participant's services must be handled separately.

Caregivers must not combine hours, tasks, documentation, or EVV records between participants.

Each participant has their own:

- Service plan.
- Authorization.
- Approved hours.
- Task list.
- EVV record.
- Documentation.
- Rights and preferences.
- Care needs.

If two participants in the same home are each authorized for services, the caregiver must provide the full authorized service time and tasks for each participant as assigned.

Caregivers must not:

- Count the same time for two participants unless specifically authorized by Stride HealthCare and allowed by the payer.
- Document tasks for one participant under another participant's record.
- Clock in under the wrong participant.
- Use one participant's hours for another participant.
- Provide care to a household member who is not assigned.
- Assume that helping the household counts as care for both participants.
- Shorten one participant's services because another participant also receives care.
- Combine notes in a way that makes it unclear who received which service.

If the caregiver is unsure how to clock in, clock out, document, or divide tasks when more than one participant lives in the home, the caregiver must contact the office before continuing.

Accurate separation of participant time and tasks is required for participant safety, Medicaid compliance, and documentation accuracy.

Section 10: Transportation

10.1 Transportation Approval

Transportation requires prior office approval.

Caregivers may not transport a participant unless Stride HealthCare has approved transportation for that participant, that caregiver, that service, and that situation.

Transportation must be connected to the participant's approved service plan, authorized services, and assigned tasks. A participant or family member may not approve transportation on behalf of Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers must not transport a participant for personal reasons, unauthorized errands, social trips, family requests, caregiver convenience, or any trip that has not been approved by the office.

Before transporting a participant, the caregiver must confirm:

- Transportation is approved by Stride HealthCare.
- Transportation is allowed under the participant's service.
- The trip is connected to the service plan or approved task.
- The caregiver is approved to transport.
- The caregiver has a valid driver's license.
- The caregiver has current auto insurance.
- The vehicle is safe, clean, and legally operable.
- The participant can be transported safely.
- Required child, seat belt, mobility, or supervision rules can be followed.

Caregivers must contact the office before transporting if anything is unclear, unsafe, different from the plan, or not specifically approved.

Transportation without approval may result in removal from assignments, corrective action, suspension, or termination.

10.2 Driver Requirements

Caregivers who transport participants must meet all driver requirements set by Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers may not transport participants unless they have been approved by the office to do so.

Caregivers approved for transportation must maintain:

- A valid driver's license.
- A safe and acceptable driving record.
- Current auto insurance.
- A legally registered vehicle, when using a personal vehicle.
- A safe and properly maintained vehicle.
- Any additional documentation required by Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers must immediately notify the office if:

- Their driver's license expires, is suspended, is revoked, or is restricted.
- Their auto insurance expires, is cancelled, changes, or lapses.
- Their vehicle becomes unsafe or unavailable.
- They receive a traffic citation that may affect driving.
- They are involved in an accident.
- They are no longer comfortable or able to transport participants safely.
- They have a medical, medication, vision, mobility, or other condition that may affect safe driving.

Caregivers must not transport participants if they do not meet driver requirements.

Caregivers must not drive participants while impaired, distracted, fatigued, unsafe, unlicensed, uninsured, or otherwise unable to drive safely.

Stride HealthCare may review driving eligibility at any time and may remove a caregiver from transportation duties if the caregiver does not meet company, insurance, participant safety, Medicaid, or legal requirements.

10.3 Transportation Safety

Participant safety comes first during transportation.

Caregivers must operate vehicles safely, legally, and professionally while transporting participants or performing approved transportation-related tasks.

Caregivers must:

- Follow all traffic laws.
- Drive carefully and defensively.
- Wear a seat belt.
- Make sure the participant uses a seat belt.
- Use required child safety seats, booster seats, or restraints when applicable.
- Help the participant enter and exit the vehicle safely when approved and safe.
- Park in safe, legal, and accessible areas.
- Keep the vehicle clean and free of unsafe clutter.
- Avoid distractions while driving.
- Keep music, noise, and conversation appropriate.
- Respect the participant's comfort and privacy.
- Follow the approved destination and route unless safety requires a change.
- Contact the office if the trip changes or a concern occurs.

Caregivers must not:

- Text while driving.
- Use social media while driving.
- Watch videos while driving.
- Drive aggressively.
- Speed.
- Drive while impaired.
- Smoke or vape in the vehicle with a participant.
- Leave a participant unattended in a vehicle.
- Allow unauthorized passengers in the vehicle.
- Run personal errands while transporting a participant.
- Transport a participant to an unauthorized location.
- Use a vehicle that is unsafe, illegal, or not properly insured.

- Transport a participant when weather, road conditions, vehicle issues, or participant condition make transportation unsafe.

If transportation becomes unsafe at any point, the caregiver must stop when safe to do so and contact the office. If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency, the caregiver must call 911 first.

10.4 Children's Transportation

Transportation for Children's Personal Care has additional restrictions.

Caregivers must not transport a child participant unless Stride HealthCare has specifically approved the transportation and confirmed that it is allowed for the child, service, age, authorization, and situation.

Caregivers must follow all child-specific transportation rules exactly.

For Children's Personal Care:

- Transportation must be approved in advance by the office.
- Transportation must be connected to the child's approved service plan or authorized service.
- Transportation must be allowed under the child's service requirements.
- The caregiver must be approved to transport children.
- The vehicle must be safe and appropriate for the child.
- Required seat belts, child safety seats, booster seats, or restraints must be used.
- Parent, legal guardian, or authorized adult involvement may be required.
- The caregiver must follow all office instructions before, during, and after transportation.

Caregivers must not transport a child participant:

- Without office approval.
- Without required parent, legal guardian, or authorized adult involvement when required.

- Without required child safety equipment.
- In an unsafe vehicle.
- To an unauthorized location.
- For personal errands or family convenience.
- When the child's condition makes transportation unsafe.
- When the caregiver is unsure whether transportation is allowed.

If a parent, guardian, or family member asks the caregiver to transport a child and the office has not approved it, the caregiver must politely decline and contact the office.

When in doubt, do not transport. Call the office.

10.5 Unsafe Transportation

Caregivers must not transport participants when transportation is unsafe.

Unsafe transportation situations may include:

- Unsafe weather.
- Flooding, ice, high winds, severe storms, or hazardous road conditions.
- Vehicle mechanical problems.
- Flat tire, warning lights, brake problems, or steering problems.
- Expired license, registration, or insurance.
- Missing seat belt or unsafe seat belt.
- Lack of required child safety seat or booster seat.
- Participant cannot be safely transferred into or out of the vehicle.
- Participant is too ill, weak, confused, agitated, or unstable for transportation.
- Participant refuses transportation.
- Participant needs medical transport instead of caregiver transportation.
- Participant uses equipment that cannot be safely transported.
- Caregiver is sick, impaired, fatigued, distracted, or unable to drive safely.
- The destination is not approved.
- The trip is outside the service plan or office instructions.
- The caregiver feels unsafe.

Caregivers must not ignore safety concerns to complete a trip.

If transportation is unsafe, the caregiver must:

- Keep the participant safe.
- Contact the office immediately.
- Call 911 if there is immediate danger or a medical emergency.
- Follow office instructions.
- Document the concern as instructed.

Caregivers will not be expected to place themselves, participants, or others in unsafe transportation situations.

10.6 Transportation Incidents

Caregivers must report transportation incidents immediately.

A transportation incident includes any event that occurs during approved transportation or an approved community task that affects safety, timing, participant condition, vehicle status, documentation, or the approved plan.

Transportation incidents may include:

- Vehicle accident.
- Traffic stop.
- Vehicle breakdown.
- Flat tire.
- Unsafe road conditions.
- Participant injury.
- Participant illness.
- Participant fall while entering or exiting the vehicle.
- Participant refusal to continue transportation.
- Participant behavior that affects safe driving.
- Caregiver injury.
- Delayed return.
- Wrong destination.
- Unplanned stop.
- Lost receipt, money, or participant property.
- Any police, fire, or Emergency Medical Services involvement.

If an accident occurs, the caregiver must:

- Stop safely.
- Check for immediate danger.
- Call 911 when needed.
- Follow emergency responder instructions.
- Contact the office as soon as safely possible.
- Do not admit fault or argue at the scene.
- Exchange required information as legally required.
- Obtain a police report number if available.
- Document the incident as instructed.
- Follow all office, insurance, and reporting instructions.

If a participant is injured, complains of pain, appears confused, becomes ill, or has any medical concern after a transportation incident, the caregiver must call 911 when appropriate and notify the office immediately.

Caregivers must not hide transportation incidents, even if the incident seems minor.

10.7 Escorting Participants

Escorting means accompanying a participant to an approved activity, appointment, errand, or community location when the task is authorized and assigned.

Escorting may involve walking with the participant, helping the participant stay oriented, providing supervision, assisting with approved non-medical support, or helping the participant safely get to and from an approved location.

Caregivers may escort participants only when approved by Stride HealthCare and allowed by the participant's service plan.

Caregivers must:

- Follow the approved destination and purpose.
- Stay with the participant unless instructed otherwise.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Protect participant privacy.
- Avoid discussing private participant information in public.
- Assist only with approved non-medical tasks.

- Contact the office if the plan changes.
- Document the escort task as instructed.

Caregivers must not:

- Take the participant to unauthorized locations.
- Leave the participant alone when supervision is required.
- Make medical decisions during appointments.
- Sign medical, legal, or financial documents for the participant.
- Speak on behalf of the participant unless specifically authorized.
- Discuss service hours, Medicaid decisions, or company issues with outside parties.
- Use escort time for the caregiver's personal errands.
- Transport or escort unauthorized household members, family members, visitors, or pets.

If a medical provider, office, facility, or third party asks the caregiver for information or decisions outside the caregiver's role, the caregiver must refer them to the office or the participant's authorized representative.

10.8 Community Errands

Community errands must be approved and connected to the participant's service plan or assigned task list.

Caregivers may assist with approved errands such as grocery shopping, picking up household items, delivering payments, returning receipts, or helping the participant complete approved community tasks.

Caregivers must follow all money, receipt, safety, transportation, and documentation rules.

Caregivers must:

- Confirm the errand is approved.
- Use participant funds only for the approved purpose.
- Keep participant money separate from caregiver money.
- Keep all receipts.

- Return receipts and change to the participant.
- Document the errand as instructed.
- Contact the office if something changes.
- Avoid personal errands during participant time.
- Protect participant privacy in public.

Caregivers must not:

- Use participant money for personal purchases.
- Keep participant change, receipts, cards, or property.
- Add personal items to participant purchases.
- Use participant debit cards, credit cards, checks, benefits cards, or accounts unless specifically approved by the office.
- Make financial decisions for the participant.
- Pressure the participant to purchase or not purchase something.
- Run errands for family members, roommates, neighbors, visitors, or pets unless approved by the office.
- Perform errands that are unsafe, unauthorized, or outside the service plan.

If there is a missing receipt, missing money, declined payment, lost card, disputed purchase, unsafe situation, or concern involving participant funds or property, the caregiver must contact the office immediately.

Community errands are part of participant care when approved. They must be handled with honesty, accuracy, professionalism, and documentation.

Section 11: Safety

11.1 Safety Standard

Safety comes first.

Caregivers are expected to work in a way that protects the participant, the caregiver, family members, household members, coworkers, and the public.

Caregivers must use good judgment, follow the participant's service plan, follow company policy, and contact the office when a situation is unsafe, unclear, or outside the caregiver's role.

Caregivers must:

- Follow all safety instructions from Stride HealthCare.
- Follow the participant's service plan and task list.
- Use safe body mechanics.
- Follow infection control practices.
- Use required personal protective equipment when needed.
- Keep walkways and care areas as safe as possible.
- Report unsafe home conditions.
- Report participant changes or safety concerns.
- Report incidents, injuries, falls, emergencies, and unusual events.
- Stop a task if it becomes unsafe.
- Call 911 when there is an immediate emergency.
- Contact the office as soon as safely possible after an emergency or safety concern.

Caregivers must not ignore safety concerns to complete a task.

If a task is unsafe, unauthorized, medical, skilled, unclear, or outside the caregiver's training, the caregiver must stop and call the office.

11.2 Infection Control

Caregivers must follow infection control practices to help reduce the spread of illness.

Participants may be older adults, children, individuals with disabilities, or individuals with

health conditions that place them at higher risk for infection. Caregivers must take infection control seriously during every shift.

Caregivers must practice proper hand hygiene.

Caregivers should wash hands with soap and water:

- Before and after providing care.
- Before preparing food.
- Before assisting with meals.
- After using the restroom.
- After assisting with toileting or incontinence care.
- After contact with body fluids.
- After removing gloves.
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing the nose.
- After handling trash or soiled items.
- After cleaning.
- Before and after wearing gloves.
- Before leaving the participant's home.

If soap and water are not available, caregivers may use hand sanitizer when appropriate. Soap and water should be used when hands are visibly dirty or after contact with certain body fluids.

Caregivers must use gloves and other personal protective equipment when needed based on the task, infection risk, company instruction, or participant condition.

Caregivers must:

- Use gloves when contact with body fluids may occur.
- Change gloves between tasks when needed.
- Remove gloves safely.
- Wash hands after removing gloves.
- Avoid touching the face with contaminated hands or gloves.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Clean participant-related surfaces as assigned.
- Handle soiled laundry carefully.
- Dispose of trash safely.
- Report infection concerns to the office.

- Caregivers must not reuse disposable gloves, ignore hand hygiene, work while knowingly contagious, or perform tasks without needed protective equipment.
- If a caregiver does not have needed supplies, the caregiver must contact the office.

11.3 Illness and Work Restrictions

Caregivers must not report to work when they are too sick to safely provide care or when they may expose a participant to a contagious illness.

Caregivers must notify the office as soon as possible if illness, symptoms, exposure, injury, medication effects, or work restrictions may affect the ability to work.

Caregivers must contact the office before reporting to work if they have:

- Fever.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- New or worsening cough.
- Shortness of breath.
- Flu-like symptoms.
- Symptoms of a contagious illness.
- Open or draining wounds that cannot be safely covered.
- Known exposure to a serious communicable illness.
- A medical restriction that affects work.
- Medication side effects that affect alertness, coordination, judgment, or safety.
- Any condition that makes it unsafe to provide care.

Caregivers must not hide illness, exposure, injury, or restrictions in order to keep a shift.

Stride HealthCare may require a doctor's note, return-to-work note, work restriction note, or medical clearance before the caregiver returns to work.

Caregivers must follow office instructions about returning to work, wearing personal protective

equipment, limiting duties, or staying away from participant care.

Participant safety comes first.

11.4 Lifting and Fall Prevention

Caregivers must use safe lifting, transfer, repositioning, and fall prevention practices.

Caregivers may assist with mobility only when the task is authorized, safe, within the caregiver's training, and listed in the participant's service plan or task list.

Caregivers must:

- Use proper body mechanics.
- Keep pathways clear when possible.
- Encourage the participant to use approved assistive devices.
- Make sure shoes, walkers, canes, wheelchairs, and transfer areas are safe when possible.
- Move slowly and communicate before assisting.
- Ask the participant to participate as much as safely possible.
- Stop if the participant reports pain, dizziness, weakness, shortness of breath, or distress.
- Report falls, near falls, weakness, unsafe equipment, or mobility changes.
- Call the office if a transfer or mobility task feels unsafe.

Caregivers must not:

- Lift more than they can safely handle.
- Perform a two-person transfer alone.
- Use equipment they have not been trained to use.
- Use broken or unsafe equipment.
- Force a participant to stand, walk, transfer, or exercise.
- Catch a falling participant in a way that creates serious risk to the caregiver or participant.
- Lift a participant from the floor after a fall unless directed by emergency responders or specifically trained and approved by Stride HealthCare.

- Perform physical therapy or create an exercise program.
- Continue a mobility task that becomes unsafe.

If a participant falls, the caregiver must not automatically lift the participant.

The caregiver must:

- Stay calm.
- Check for immediate danger.
- Call 911 if the participant is injured, in pain, confused, unable to get up safely, hit their head, lost consciousness, or the caregiver is unsure.
- Contact the office as soon as safely possible.
- Follow emergency responder and office instructions.
- Document the fall as instructed.

Fall prevention is part of safe care. Caregivers must report hazards and changes before they become serious.

11.5 Unsafe Conditions

Caregivers must report unsafe conditions immediately.

An unsafe condition is anything in the home, community, vehicle, participant condition, household situation, or work environment that may place the participant, caregiver, or others at risk.

Unsafe conditions may include:

- Cluttered walkways.
- Fall hazards.
- Loose rugs.
- Poor lighting.
- Broken stairs or handrails.
- Unsafe bathroom setup.
- Unsafe bed or chair setup.
- Broken mobility equipment.
- Lack of heat, air conditioning, water, or electricity.
- Fire hazards.
- Exposed wiring.
- Pest infestation.

- Unsafe animals.
- Weapons or threats.
- Illegal activity.
- Aggressive behavior.
- Smoking or oxygen safety concerns.
- Unsanitary conditions.
- Biohazards.
- Hoarding conditions.
- Severe weather or travel hazards.
- Unsafe neighborhood or parking situation.
- Any situation that makes the caregiver feel unsafe.

Caregivers must not ignore unsafe conditions or attempt tasks that place them or the participant at risk.

If the situation is immediately dangerous, the caregiver must call 911 and move to safety when possible.

If the situation is concerning but not an immediate emergency, the caregiver must contact the office for instructions.

Caregivers must not argue with participants, family members, household members, or visitors about unsafe conditions. The caregiver should remain professional, remove themselves from danger if needed, and contact the office.

11.6 Workplace Injuries

Caregivers must report workplace injuries immediately.

A workplace injury is any injury, illness, exposure, accident, strain, fall, bite, scratch, assault, needle stick, contact with body fluids, vehicle incident, or other event that occurs while working or performing company-related duties.

Caregivers must report workplace injuries even if the injury seems minor.

Examples include:

- Back strain.
- Slip, trip, or fall.

- Muscle strain.
- Cut or scrape.
- Burn.
- Bite or scratch.
- Exposure to blood or body fluids.
- Needle stick or sharp object injury.
- Vehicle accident while working.
- Injury during transfer or repositioning.
- Injury caused by a participant, animal, visitor, or household member.
- Illness or exposure related to the work environment.

If a caregiver is injured, the caregiver must:

- Get to safety.
- Call 911 if emergency care is needed.
- Notify the office as soon as safely possible.
- Follow company instructions.
- Complete required injury or incident documentation.
- Provide medical or work restriction documentation when requested.
- Keep the office updated on work status and restrictions.

Caregivers must not continue working after an injury if it is unsafe to do so.

Caregivers must not hide injuries to avoid paperwork, protect a shift, or continue working when they are not safe to work.

Stride HealthCare may require medical clearance or work restriction documentation before the caregiver returns to work.

11.7 Basic First Aid

Caregivers provide non-medical care.

Basic first aid is limited to simple, immediate support within the caregiver's training while waiting for emergency help or office instructions. Caregivers must not perform medical treatment, skilled nursing care, or procedures outside their role.

Caregivers may provide basic support when appropriate, such as:

- Calling 911.
- Staying calm with the participant.
- Keeping the participant safe from further harm.
- Washing hands and using gloves when needed.
- Applying simple pressure to minor bleeding if trained and safe.
- Using a basic bandage for a minor cut if appropriate and allowed.
- Helping the participant sit or rest safely.
- Monitoring until help arrives.
- Following emergency responder instructions.
- Contacting the office.

Caregivers must not:

- Diagnose an injury or illness.
- Decide that emergency help is not needed when symptoms are serious.
- Perform wound care.
- Change wound dressings.
- Apply prescription medication.
- Give medication.
- Move a seriously injured participant unless needed to avoid immediate danger.
- Lift a participant after a fall unless directed by emergency responders or approved by Stride HealthCare.
- Perform CPR unless trained and willing to do so.
- Use medical equipment they are not trained or authorized to use.
- Provide care that is medical, skilled, unsafe, or outside company policy.

Caregivers must call 911 immediately for serious symptoms or emergencies, including:

- Chest pain.
- Trouble breathing.
- Severe bleeding.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Seizure.
- Stroke symptoms.
- Severe allergic reaction.
- Serious fall.

- Head injury.
- Severe pain.
- Sudden weakness.
- New confusion.
- Fire, violence, or immediate danger.
- Any situation where the caregiver is unsure whether emergency help is needed.

After calling 911, the caregiver must contact the office as soon as safely possible.

11.8 Emergency Response

Caregivers must respond quickly and calmly during emergencies.

An emergency is any situation involving immediate danger, serious injury, serious illness, fire, violence, unsafe conditions, police involvement, Emergency Medical Services involvement, or any event that requires urgent action.

Caregivers must call 911 first when there is immediate danger or a possible medical emergency.

Examples of emergencies include:

- Chest pain.
- Trouble breathing.
- Severe bleeding.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Seizure.
- Stroke symptoms.
- Serious fall.
- Head injury.
- Severe allergic reaction.
- Fire.
- Carbon monoxide concern.
- Violence or threat of violence.
- Participant missing or wandering.
- Unsafe weapon situation.
- Serious vehicle accident.
- Any situation that appears life-threatening or immediately unsafe.

During an emergency, caregivers must:

- Stay calm.

- Call 911 when needed.
- Give the dispatcher clear information.
- Provide the participant's location.
- Follow dispatcher instructions.
- Keep the participant safe if possible.
- Do not perform tasks outside the caregiver's role.
- Do not leave the participant unless the caregiver must leave to avoid immediate danger.
- Contact the office as soon as safely possible.
- Follow office instructions.
- Document the emergency as instructed.

Caregivers must not delay calling 911 because they are trying to reach the office first. The office should be contacted after emergency help is requested when there is immediate danger.

If the caregiver is in danger, the caregiver should move to safety and call 911.

11.9 Hospital and Ambulance Transfers

Caregivers must follow company instructions when a participant is transported by ambulance, taken to the emergency room, admitted to the hospital, or transferred to another care setting.

If a participant has a medical emergency, the caregiver must call 911 when needed and contact the office as soon as safely possible.

Caregivers must not attempt to provide medical care, make medical decisions, or delay emergency services.

If Emergency Medical Services, police, fire department, or another emergency responder arrives, the caregiver must cooperate and provide basic factual information within the caregiver's role.

Caregivers may provide factual information such as:

- Participant name.
- What the caregiver observed.
- What happened.
- Time symptoms or incident began, if known.

- Known emergency contacts if available.
- Basic information from the service plan if needed and appropriate.
- Information requested by emergency responders that is necessary for immediate safety.

Caregivers must not guess, diagnose, interpret symptoms, make medical decisions, or provide information they do not know.

If the participant is transported to the emergency room or hospital, the caregiver must contact the office for instructions.

Caregivers may remain with the participant only when authorized and only while providing approved support. Once the participant is admitted, transferred, or placed under the care of another entity, the caregiver must clock out and contact the office unless the office gives different instructions.

Caregivers must not remain clocked in after authorized care ends.

Caregivers must document the event as instructed.

11.10 Disaster Preparedness

Caregivers must follow Stride HealthCare's instructions during disasters, severe weather, power outages, public emergencies, and other emergency events.

Disaster preparedness helps protect participants, caregivers, and service continuity.

Disasters or emergency events may include:

- Hurricanes.
- Tornadoes.
- Severe storms.
- Flooding.
- Ice or snow.
- Extreme heat.
- Power outage.
- Water outage.
- Fire.
- Public health emergency.

- Road closure.
- Community safety threat.
- Evacuation order.
- Communication outage.
- Any event that affects participant safety or service delivery.

Caregivers must:

- Monitor communication from Stride HealthCare during emergency events.
- Respond to office calls, texts, or messages as soon as reasonably possible.
- Follow schedule changes or emergency coverage instructions.
- Report unsafe travel conditions.
- Report participant safety concerns.
- Call 911 for immediate danger.
- Contact the office if a participant has urgent needs.
- Document disaster-related concerns as instructed.
- Avoid placing themselves in unsafe conditions.

If a caregiver is with a participant during a disaster or severe weather event, the caregiver must:

- Stay calm.
- Follow emergency instructions from local authorities when applicable.
- Keep the participant as safe as possible.
- Contact the office as soon as safely possible.
- Call 911 if there is immediate danger.
- Avoid unsafe travel.
- Follow shelter, evacuation, or safety instructions as appropriate.

Caregivers should not make independent promises to participants or families about emergency coverage, evacuation, transportation, supplies, or schedule changes. These questions must be referred to the office.

Stride HealthCare may adjust schedules, prioritize participants, assign backup coverage, pause unsafe services, or provide emergency instructions based on participant needs, caregiver safety,

weather conditions, road conditions, and business operations.

Caregivers are expected to cooperate with reasonable emergency planning and communication efforts.

Section 12: Reporting

12.1 Incident Reporting

Caregivers must report incidents immediately.

An incident is any event, concern, change, mistake, unsafe condition, injury, emergency, allegation, unusual event, or situation that affects or may affect the participant's safety, health, rights, services, property, privacy, or care.

Incident reporting is required so Stride HealthCare can protect participants, respond quickly, meet documentation requirements, notify the correct parties, and take appropriate follow-up action.

Caregivers must report incidents to the office as soon as safely possible.

Caregivers must report:

- Falls.
- Injuries.
- Emergency room visits.
- Hospitalizations.
- Ambulance, police, fire department, or Emergency Medical Services involvement.
- Medication concerns.
- Participant refusal of care that affects safety.
- Participant not home or unavailable.
- Participant leaves during a shift.
- Participant condition changes.
- Unsafe home conditions.
- Unsafe behavior by a participant, family member, visitor, or other person.
- Suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Missing money, missing property, or financial concerns.
- Transportation incidents.
- Privacy or confidentiality concerns.
- EVV or documentation problems.
- Caregiver injury.
- Any unusual event that may affect care, safety, services, or compliance.

Caregivers must not decide that an incident is "too small" to report. If there is any question, the caregiver must contact the office.

Reporting an incident does not automatically mean the caregiver did something wrong. Reporting shows responsibility, honesty, and concern for participant safety.

Failure to report an incident may result in corrective action, removal from assignments, suspension, or termination.

12.2 Serious Events

Serious events must be reported immediately.

A serious event is any situation that involves immediate danger, serious injury, emergency response, hospitalization, law enforcement involvement, suspected abuse, suspected neglect, suspected exploitation, missing participant, major change in condition, or any event that may require urgent company action.

Caregivers must call 911 first when there is immediate danger or a possible medical emergency.

After calling 911, the caregiver must contact the office as soon as safely possible.

Serious events may include:

- Participant fall with injury or possible injury.
- Participant hits their head.
- Participant loses consciousness.
- Chest pain.
- Trouble breathing.
- Stroke symptoms.
- Seizure.
- Severe bleeding.
- Severe pain.
- New confusion.
- Sudden weakness.
- Serious allergic reaction.
- Fire.
- Carbon monoxide concern.
- Violence or threat of violence.
- Weapon concern.
- Participant missing or wandering.
- Ambulance transport.
- Emergency room visit.

- Hospital admission.
- Police, fire department, or Emergency Medical Services involvement.
- Suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Unsafe home condition that creates immediate danger.
- Any situation where the caregiver is unsure whether emergency help is needed.

Caregivers must remain calm, protect immediate safety when possible, follow emergency responder instructions, and contact the office.

Caregivers must not delay emergency help while trying to reach the office first.

12.3 Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

Stride HealthCare does not tolerate abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Caregivers are expected to protect participants and report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation immediately.

Abuse may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, intimidation, threats, humiliation, rough handling, unreasonable restraint, or any action that harms or may harm a participant.

Neglect may include failure to provide needed care, food, water, hygiene, supervision, medication access, safe conditions, protection, or other necessary support when someone is responsible for providing that support.

Exploitation may include taking, misusing, pressuring, manipulating, or controlling a participant's money, property, benefits, documents, accounts, identity, home, personal information, or services for someone else's benefit.

Caregivers must report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation even if:

- The caregiver is not sure.
- The participant asks the caregiver not to report it.

- A family member says it is not a concern.
- The suspected person is a family member.
- The suspected person is another caregiver.
- The suspected person is a Stride HealthCare employee.
- The suspected person is a friend, visitor, neighbor, or household member.
- The concern happened before the caregiver arrived.
- The concern seems embarrassing or uncomfortable.
- The caregiver believes someone else may report it.

Caregivers must never ignore signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Possible warning signs may include:

- Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, or injuries.
- Fearfulness around a specific person.
- Sudden changes in behavior.
- Poor hygiene or unsafe living conditions.
- Lack of food, water, heat, air conditioning, or needed supplies.
- Repeated missed care or abandonment.
- Unexplained missing money or property.
- Pressure to give money, gifts, access, or account information.
- Unusual financial activity.
- Participant reports being hurt, threatened, controlled, or taken advantage of.
- Participant appears afraid to speak freely.
- Family or household member blocks access to the participant.
- Any situation that feels unsafe, coercive, or suspicious.

If there is immediate danger, the caregiver must call 911 first.

After immediate safety is addressed, the caregiver must contact the office and follow reporting instructions.

Caregivers must not investigate abuse, confront the suspected person, accuse people in the home, take

evidence from the home or place themselves in danger.

Caregivers must report what they observed, heard, or were told. The office and appropriate authorities will determine next steps.

12.4 Incident Documentation

Caregivers must document incidents honestly, clearly, and promptly.

Incident documentation must be factual. It should describe what happened, what the caregiver observed, what the participant said, what actions were taken, who was notified, and any instructions received.

Caregivers must document incidents as instructed by the office.

Incident documentation may include:

- Date and time of the incident.
- Participant name.
- Location of the incident.
- What happened.
- What the caregiver observed.
- What the participant reported.
- Names of people involved or present, if known.
- Whether 911 was called.
- Whether Emergency Medical Services, police, or fire department responded.
- Whether the office was notified.
- Instructions received from the office.
- Actions taken by the caregiver.
- Participant condition after the incident.
- Whether the participant refused care, treatment, or emergency help.
- Any follow-up needed.

Caregivers must not include guesses, blame, gossip, opinions, insults, or conclusions that are not based on facts.

Caregivers should write:

“Participant stated she felt dizzy while walking to the bathroom. Caregiver assisted participant to sit

safely. Participant denied pain. Office notified at 10:15 a.m. and instructed caregiver to monitor and report changes.”

Caregivers should not write:

“Participant was being dramatic and probably just wanted attention.”

Caregivers must not change, hide, destroy, backdate, or falsify incident documentation.

Caregivers must not ask a participant, family member, or another caregiver to change information or hide what happened.

If a caregiver makes a documentation mistake, the caregiver must notify the office and follow correction instructions.

12.5 Non-Retaliation

Stride HealthCare prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports a concern in good faith.

Good-faith reporting means the caregiver honestly reports a concern, incident, safety issue, privacy concern, abuse concern, neglect concern, exploitation concern, policy violation, or compliance issue, even if the concern is later not confirmed.

Caregivers may report concerns without fear of retaliation.

Retaliation may include:

- Threats.
- Harassment.
- Intimidation.
- Reduced hours because of a report.
- Removal from assignments because of a report.
- Negative treatment because of a report.
- Bullying.
- Pressure to withdraw a report.
- Pressure to change documentation.
- Blame for reporting.
- Any action meant to punish or discourage reporting.

- Caregivers must not retaliate against a participant, family member, coworker, supervisor, office staff member, or any other person for reporting a concern or cooperating with an investigation.
- A caregiver who believes they are experiencing retaliation must report it to the office.
- Making a knowingly false report, lying during a review, falsifying documentation, or reporting in bad faith is not protected and may result in corrective action.

12.6 Investigation Cooperation

Caregivers must cooperate with incident reviews, safety reviews, privacy reviews, personnel reviews, Medicaid reviews, licensing reviews, and other investigations involving participant care or company operations.

Cooperation may include:

- Answering questions honestly.
- Providing a written statement.
- Completing incident documentation.
- Providing facts about what happened.
- Sharing relevant messages, notes, or records.
- Participating in follow-up meetings.
- Following instructions from the office.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Not interfering with the review.
- Not discussing the investigation with unauthorized people.
- Not pressuring others about what to say.
- Not changing, deleting, hiding, or destroying information.

Caregivers must be truthful during all reviews and investigations.

Caregivers must not guess. If a caregiver does not know the answer, the caregiver should say they do not know.

Caregivers must not coach witnesses, blame others without facts, spread rumors, or discuss confidential investigation details with participants, families, coworkers, or outside parties.

Stride HealthCare may remove a caregiver from a participant assignment, pause shifts, require retraining, issue corrective action, or take other action while an incident or investigation is being reviewed.

Failure to cooperate with an investigation may result in corrective action, removal from assignments, suspension, or termination.

Section 13: Participant Rights

13.1 Participant Rights

Participants have rights.

Caregivers are expected to protect those rights during every shift, every task, and every interaction.

Participants have the right to be treated with respect, dignity, privacy, and fairness. They have the right to receive care in a safe, professional, and person-first way.

Participant rights may include the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Be free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, threats, and intimidation.
- Receive care without unlawful discrimination.
- Have privacy during personal care.
- Have personal information kept confidential.
- Participate in decisions about their care.
- Refuse care or a specific task.
- Be informed about services.
- Voice complaints or concerns without retaliation.
- Have property, money, and belongings respected.
- Receive services according to the approved service plan.
- Be safe in their home and during approved services.
- Have cultural, personal, and religious preferences respected when possible.
- Be supported in a way that encourages independence.

Caregivers must not treat participant rights as optional.

If a participant expresses a concern, refuses care, asks for a change, reports a problem, or appears unsafe, the caregiver must contact the office.

13.2 Choice and Independence

Participants have the right to make choices about their own lives.

Caregivers should support independence whenever it is safe, appropriate, and within the service plan.

Participants may have preferences about:

- Daily routines.
- Clothing.
- Meals.
- Bathing.
- Grooming.
- Activities.
- Conversation.
- Household tasks.
- Personal space.
- Timing of tasks.
- How assistance is provided.

Caregivers must respect participant choice unless the request is unsafe, unauthorized, illegal, medical, skilled, outside the service plan, or outside the caregiver's role.

Caregivers should encourage participants to do what they can safely do for themselves. Caregivers should not take over tasks that the participant can safely perform with support.

Caregivers must not:

- Force care.
- Rush the participant unnecessarily.
- Ignore the participant's preferences.
- Take away reasonable choices.
- Speak for the participant unless specifically authorized.
- Make decisions for the participant.
- Treat the participant as helpless.
- Use control, guilt, pressure, or fear to get the participant to comply.

If a participant's choice creates a safety concern, the caregiver must contact the office.

The caregiver's role is to support the participant, not control the participant.

13.3 Privacy and Dignity

Participants have the right to privacy and dignity.

Caregivers must protect privacy during all services, especially during personal care tasks such as bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting, continence care, repositioning, and hygiene assistance.

Caregivers must:

- Knock or announce themselves before entering private areas.
- Ask permission before touching the participant or their belongings.
- Explain what they are doing before assisting.
- Close doors, curtains, or blinds when appropriate.
- Keep the participant covered as much as possible during personal care.
- Speak respectfully.
- Avoid embarrassment, shame, or unnecessary exposure.
- Keep personal information private.
- Avoid discussing private care needs in front of others.
- Respect the participant's home and personal space.

Caregivers must not:

- Shame a participant for needing assistance.
- Make jokes about the participant's body, hygiene, disability, home, family, or needs.
- Discuss toileting, bathing, incontinence, hygiene, or other private matters where others can hear.
- Allow unnecessary people to be present during personal care.
- Take photos, videos, or recordings of the participant.
- Share private participant information with unauthorized people.
- Search through participant belongings unless authorized for an assigned task.

Privacy and dignity are not only privacy rules. They are part of respectful care.

If a caregiver is unsure whether something may affect privacy or dignity, the caregiver must pause and contact the office.

13.4 Cultural Respect

Caregivers must respect participant differences.

Participants may have different backgrounds, beliefs, traditions, languages, family structures, communication styles, routines, foods, religions, values, disabilities, and personal preferences.

Caregivers are expected to provide care without judgment.

Caregivers must:

- Speak respectfully.
- Avoid stereotypes.
- Avoid mocking or criticizing beliefs, customs, family practices, food choices, clothing, language, disability, age, or identity.
- Use the participant's preferred name when appropriate.
- Respect religious or cultural practices when safe and within the service plan.
- Ask respectful questions when needed to understand preferences.
- Contact the office if a preference conflicts with the service plan, safety, or the caregiver's role.

Caregivers must not impose personal beliefs, politics, religion, opinions, or lifestyle choices on participants.

Caregivers must not debate sensitive topics with participants or families in a way that creates conflict, discomfort, or disrespect.

Caregivers are not required to perform tasks that are unsafe, illegal, medical, skilled, unauthorized, or outside the service plan. If a participant's request is unclear or creates a concern, the caregiver must contact the office.

13.5 Complaints and Concerns

Participants have the right to make complaints or raise concerns without retaliation.

Caregivers must take participant complaints seriously and respond professionally.

A complaint or concern may involve:

- Missed care.
- Late arrival.
- Caregiver behavior.
- Service quality.
- Communication.
- Privacy.
- Safety.
- Task completion.
- Schedule concerns.
- Participant rights.
- Family concerns.
- Office concerns.
- Another caregiver.
- Any issue affecting care or services.

Caregivers must not argue with a participant or family member about a complaint.

Caregivers must:

- Listen calmly.
- Remain professional.
- Avoid blame or defensiveness.
- Avoid making promises the office has not approved.
- Report the concern to the office.
- Follow office instructions.
- Document the concern if instructed.

Caregivers must not:

- Threaten the participant.
- Ignore the complaint.
- Tell the participant not to complain.
- Retaliate against the participant.
- Treat the participant differently because of a complaint.
- Discuss the complaint with unauthorized people.

- Try to handle a serious complaint without notifying the office.

If a participant or family member is upset, the caregiver should remain calm and contact the office for support.

Complaints help Stride HealthCare identify problems, correct issues, and improve care.

13.6 Following the Plan of Care

Caregivers are responsible for following the participant's plan of care, service plan, authorization, task list, and office instructions.

The plan of care protects the participant by identifying what services are approved and what tasks should be completed. It also protects the caregiver by defining what the caregiver is allowed to do.

Caregivers must:

- Review assigned tasks.
- Provide only approved services.
- Follow task instructions.
- Stay within the caregiver scope.
- Complete assigned tasks safely and respectfully.
- Respect participant choice and refusals.
- Report tasks that cannot be completed.
- Report service plan concerns.
- Contact the office before changing tasks.

Caregivers must not:

- Add tasks without office approval.
- Stop assigned tasks without notifying the office.
- Change the schedule without approval.
- Perform tasks for other household members unless approved.
- Perform medical or skilled tasks.
- Provide services outside authorized time or location.
- Promise participants or families that services will be changed.

- Discuss or negotiate authorized hours with participants or families unless directed by the office.

If the participant or family requests a task that is not listed, the caregiver must contact the office before performing it.

If a caregiver believes the participant needs additional support, different tasks, or a change to the plan of care, the caregiver must report the concern to the office.

Caregivers must not change the plan of care on their own.

13.7 Reporting Changes

Caregivers must report changes that may affect participant safety, care, services, or the plan of care.

Caregivers often see changes before anyone else does. Reporting changes early helps protect the participant and helps Stride HealthCare respond appropriately.

Caregivers must report changes such as:

- New or worsening weakness.
- Falls or near falls.
- New confusion.
- Increased forgetfulness.
- Behavior changes.
- Mood changes.
- New pain.
- Trouble breathing.
- Skin concerns.
- Wounds, redness, swelling, or bruising.
- Medication concerns.
- Appetite or fluid intake changes.
- Toileting or continence changes.
- Hygiene decline.
- Mobility changes.
- Unsafe home conditions.
- Lack of food, supplies, utilities, or safe equipment.
- Participant refusal of care.
- Repeated missed visits.

- Hospitalization or emergency room visit.
- Participant moving or planning to move.
- Participant no longer wanting services.
- Family conflict affecting care.
- Suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Any other change that seems important, unusual, unsafe, or concerning.

13.8 Protecting Participant Safety

Caregivers share responsibility for protecting participant safety.

Protecting safety means noticing concerns, following the service plan, staying within the caregiver role, reporting changes, using good judgment, and asking for help when something is unclear.

Caregivers must protect participant safety by:

- Arriving for scheduled shifts.
- Following the plan of care.
- Completing assigned tasks.
- Using safe infection control practices.
- Using safe lifting and transfer practices.
- Reporting unsafe conditions.
- Reporting participant changes.
- Reporting incidents.
- Respecting refusals while reporting concerns.
- Protecting privacy and dignity.
- Staying alert during shifts.
- Avoiding distractions.
- Calling 911 during emergencies.
- Contacting the office when guidance is needed.

Caregivers must not place participants at risk by:

- Ignoring care needs.
- Leaving early without approval.
- Sleeping during shifts.
- Using personal phones excessively.
- Performing unsafe tasks.
- Providing unauthorized care.
- Failing to report changes.
- Failing to report incidents.
- Working while sick, impaired, or unfit for duty.
- Bringing unauthorized people, children, or pets to work.

- Falsifying documentation.
- Violating privacy or confidentiality.
- Engaging in abuse, neglect, exploitation, threats, or intimidation.

If a caregiver believes a participant is not safe, the caregiver must act.

For immediate danger, call 911 first.

For concerns that are serious but not immediately life-threatening, contact the office as soon as possible.

Participant safety is not optional. It is part of every shift.

Section 14: Accountability

14.1 Coaching

Stride HealthCare may use coaching to support caregiver performance, correct concerns, and prevent future problems.

Coaching is usually used when a concern can be corrected through communication, clarification, retraining, or improved follow-through. Coaching does not always mean the caregiver is in serious trouble, but it should be taken seriously.

Coaching may be used for concerns such as:

- Attendance issues.
- Tardiness.
- Documentation errors.
- EVV mistakes.
- Communication concerns.
- Dress code concerns.
- Minor professionalism concerns.
- Missed training deadlines.
- Service plan misunderstandings.
- Task completion issues.
- Failure to follow office instructions.
- Participant or family concerns.
- Any other concern that needs correction.

Caregivers are expected to listen, ask questions, accept feedback professionally, and correct the concern.

Coaching may be verbal, written, in-person, by phone, by message, during training, or during a performance review.

Stride HealthCare may document coaching in the caregiver's personnel file.

Coaching does not change the at-will employment relationship. Stride HealthCare may skip coaching and move directly to corrective action, shift removal, suspension, or termination depending on the situation.

14.2 Corrective Action

Corrective action may be used when a caregiver violates policy, fails to meet expectations, repeats a concern, creates risk, or does not correct an issue after coaching.

Corrective action is intended to address the concern, explain expectations, and identify what must change.

Corrective action may include:

- Verbal warning.
- Written warning.
- Final written warning.
- Corrective action plan.
- Retraining.
- Skills review.
- Competency review.
- Increased documentation review.
- Schedule restriction.
- Removal from a participant assignment.
- Suspension.
- Termination.

Stride HealthCare may consider the following when deciding the appropriate corrective action:

- Seriousness of the concern.
- Participant safety.
- Caregiver safety.
- Prior history.
- Pattern of behavior.
- Whether the issue was intentional.
- Whether the caregiver reported the concern.
- Whether the caregiver cooperated with review.
- Whether the issue affected Medicaid compliance.
- Whether the issue affected participant trust, privacy, or rights.
- Whether retraining is appropriate.

Corrective action does not have to follow a specific order. Stride HealthCare may skip steps or move directly to termination when appropriate.

Examples of issues that may result in corrective action include:

- Repeated tardiness.
- Repeated call-outs.
- Failure to follow the call-out process.
- Documentation problems.
- EVV errors.
- Failure to report changes or incidents.
- Unprofessional communication.
- Dress code violations.
- Cell phone misuse.
- Failure to follow the service plan.
- Failure to complete required training.
- Boundary concerns.
- Participant or family complaints.
- Policy violations.
- Failure to follow office instructions.

Caregivers are expected to correct performance concerns immediately. Failure to improve may result in additional corrective action or termination.

14.3 Shift Removal

Stride HealthCare may remove a caregiver from a scheduled shift, participant assignment, service type, or work schedule when needed.

Shift removal may be temporary or permanent. It may occur with or without prior notice depending on participant needs, safety concerns, staffing needs, compliance concerns, or company operations.

Stride HealthCare may remove a caregiver from a shift or assignment for reasons including:

- Participant request.
- Family concern.
- Caregiver request.
- Attendance issues.
- Tardiness or call-outs.
- No-call / no-show.
- Personality or communication concerns.
- Service plan mismatch.
- Skill or competency concern.
- Unsafe performance.
- Boundary concern.
- Documentation issue.

- EVV issue.
- Privacy concern.
- Transportation concern.
- Participant safety concern.
- Caregiver safety concern.
- Investigation or incident review.
- Licensing, Medicaid, or compliance concern.
- Loss of required credentials.
- Loss of transportation eligibility.
- Business or scheduling needs.

Removal from one participant assignment does not guarantee another assignment will be available.

Stride HealthCare does not guarantee a specific number of hours, a specific participant, a specific schedule, or continued placement with any participant.

Caregivers must not contact a participant or family to argue about removal, ask why they were removed, request to return, discuss office decisions, or complain about the change. Questions about shift removal must be directed to the office.

A caregiver who continues contacting a participant or family after removal may be subject to corrective action or termination.

14.4 Serious Violations

Some violations are serious enough to result in immediate removal, suspension, or termination.

Stride HealthCare may determine that a violation is serious based on participant safety, caregiver safety, legal risk, Medicaid compliance, licensing requirements, privacy concerns, dishonesty, misconduct, or damage to trust.

Serious violations may include:

- Abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Threats, violence, intimidation, or harassment.
- Theft or suspected theft.
- Financial exploitation or misuse of participant money.

- Falsifying EVV, time records, documentation, training records, or incident reports.
- Time fraud.
- Clocking in or out for another caregiver.
- Allowing another person to clock in or out for the caregiver.
- Sleeping during a shift.
- Leaving a participant unattended when supervision is required.
- Leaving a shift early without office approval.
- No-call / no-show.
- Failure to report a serious incident.
- Failure to report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Working while impaired.
- Drug or alcohol use during work.
- Possession of weapons during work.
- Serious privacy or HIPAA violation.
- Taking photos, videos, or recordings of a participant without authorization.
- Posting participant information on social media.
- Performing medical or skilled tasks outside the caregiver role.
- Administering medication without authorization.
- Transporting a participant without approval.
- Unsafe driving or transportation misconduct.
- Bringing unauthorized people, children, pets, or animals to work.
- Soliciting participants or families for private work.
- Soliciting caregivers for another provider or private arrangement.
- Sharing confidential company information.
- Refusing required screening, drug testing, training, or investigation cooperation.
- Submitting false, altered, or misleading documents.
- Criminal conduct affecting participant safety or job eligibility.
- Any conduct that places a participant, caregiver, company, or public safety at risk.

This list is not complete. Other conduct may be considered serious depending on the situation.

Stride HealthCare may report serious violations to law enforcement, Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services, Medicaid, licensing authorities, or other appropriate agencies when required or appropriate.

14.5 Resignation and Job Abandonment

Caregivers may resign from employment with Stride HealthCare at any time.

Stride HealthCare requests that caregivers provide written notice when resigning so the company can protect participant care, arrange coverage, collect company property, and complete final employment steps.

A resignation notice should include:

- Caregiver name.
- Last day available to work.
- Reason for resignation, if the caregiver chooses to provide one.
- Whether the caregiver is able to complete scheduled shifts during the notice period.
- Updated contact information for final payroll and tax documents.

Caregivers are expected to continue following all policies during the notice period.

Stride HealthCare may accept a resignation immediately or adjust the final work date based on participant needs, safety, scheduling, performance, or business needs.

Job Abandonment

Job abandonment may occur when a caregiver stops reporting to work, fails to communicate, fails to return from leave, walks off a shift, or fails to respond to the office about scheduled work.

Examples of job abandonment may include:

- Failing to report to a scheduled shift and not contacting the office.
- Repeated no-call / no-show.
- Walking out during a shift without approval.

- Leaving a participant without following office instructions.
- Failing to return after approved leave.
- Failing to respond to office contact about work status.
- Refusing to communicate about scheduled shifts.
- Stopping work without resignation notice.

Job abandonment may be treated as voluntary resignation or may result in termination, depending on the situation.

Caregivers must not abandon a participant. Leaving a participant without proper notice, office approval, or safe handoff may be treated as a serious violation.

14.6 Termination

Employment with Stride HealthCare may end for many reasons.

Because employment is at-will, either the caregiver or Stride HealthCare may end the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice, and with or without cause, as allowed by law.

Termination may occur because of:

- Policy violations.
- Poor performance.
- Attendance issues.
- No-call / no-show.
- Job abandonment.
- Participant safety concerns.
- Caregiver safety concerns.
- Loss of required qualifications.
- Failure to complete required training.
- Failure to meet competency requirements.
- Failed or refused screening.
- Failed or refused drug testing.
- Loss of driver eligibility when driving is required.
- Documentation problems.
- EVV problems.
- Medicaid compliance concerns.
- Privacy or confidentiality concerns.
- Boundary violations.
- Serious misconduct.

- Dishonesty.
- Theft, fraud, abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Lack of available assignments.
- Business needs.
- Any other lawful reason.

Stride HealthCare may terminate employment immediately for serious violations or when continued employment creates risk.

Termination does not remove the caregiver's responsibility to return company property, protect confidential information, cooperate with final documentation, and follow post-employment obligations.

14.7 Company Property

Caregivers must protect and return company property.

Company property may include:

- Identification badge.
- Uniform items provided by Stride HealthCare.
- Keys.
- Access cards.
- Paperwork.
- Training materials.
- Manuals.
- Participant information.
- Schedules.
- Devices.
- Equipment.
- Supplies.
- Documents.
- Login credentials.
- Any other item or information issued by Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers must use company property only for approved work-related purposes.

Caregivers must not:

- Keep company property after separation.
- Share company property with unauthorized persons.
- Copy company documents for personal use.

- Use company materials for another employer or private work.
- Misuse participant or company information.
- Keep participant information after employment ends.
- Share passwords, logins, or access credentials.
- Damage, alter, hide, sell, or dispose of company property without approval.

Company property must be returned when requested, when an assignment ends, when employment ends, or when the office gives instructions.

Failure to return company property may result in follow-up action allowed by law.

Confidentiality obligations continue after employment ends.

14.8 Separation Responsibilities

When employment ends, caregivers must complete all separation responsibilities.

Separation responsibilities help protect participants, maintain accurate records, close access, process final payroll, and protect confidential information.

Caregivers must:

- Return company property.
- Return identification badge.
- Return participant documents or information.
- Complete outstanding EVV corrections when requested.
- Complete outstanding documentation when requested.
- Provide updated contact information.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Stop using company systems.
- Stop representing themselves as a Stride HealthCare caregiver.
- Stop contacting participants or families for work-related reasons unless authorized.
- Cooperate with final payroll and separation steps.
- Follow any post-employment obligations that apply.

Caregivers must not:

- Keep participant information.
- Keep company records.
- Contact participants to complain about separation.
- Solicit participants for private work.
- Solicit caregivers for another provider or private arrangement.
- Share confidential company information.
- Use company materials after separation.
- Access company systems after authorization ends.

Final pay will be handled according to company policy and applicable law.

Caregivers remain responsible for honesty, confidentiality, and professional conduct after separation.

Separation from employment does not end the caregiver's responsibility to protect participant privacy, return company property, and avoid misuse of confidential information.

Section 15: Resources and References

15.1 Quick Reference Guide

This section is a quick reference for caregivers. It does not replace the full policies in this manual.

When a caregiver is unsure what to do, the caregiver must stop, use good judgment, and contact the office.

Call 911 First

Caregivers must call 911 first when there is an immediate emergency, serious injury, life-threatening concern, fire, violence, unsafe weapon situation, or immediate danger.

Examples include:

- Chest pain.
- Trouble breathing.
- Severe bleeding.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Seizure.
- Stroke symptoms.
- Serious fall.
- Head injury.
- Severe allergic reaction.
- Fire.
- Violence or threat of violence.
- Participant missing or wandering.
- Unsafe weapon situation.
- Serious vehicle accident.
- Any situation that appears life-threatening or immediately unsafe.

After calling 911, the caregiver must contact the office as soon as safely possible.

Call the Office Immediately

Caregivers must contact the office immediately when:

- The caregiver will be late.
- The caregiver cannot work a scheduled shift.
- The participant is not home.
- The participant refuses care.
- The participant asks the caregiver to leave early.
- The participant leaves during the shift.
- The participant falls.

- The participant is injured.
- The caregiver is injured.
- The participant's condition changes.
- The home is unsafe.
- The caregiver feels unsafe.
- Emergency Medical Services, police, or fire department responds.
- The participant goes to the hospital or emergency room.
- The participant is admitted to a hospital or facility.
- The caregiver is asked to perform a task not on the service plan.
- The caregiver is asked to perform medical or skilled care.
- Medication concerns occur.
- EVV, clock-in, clock-out, or documentation problems occur.
- Participant money, receipts, property, or errands create a concern.
- Abuse, neglect, or exploitation is suspected.
- A privacy or confidentiality concern occurs.
- The caregiver is unsure what to do.

Never Do These Without Office Approval

Caregivers must not:

- Transport a participant.
- Change the schedule.
- Leave a shift early.
- Add tasks to the service plan.
- Perform tasks for another household member.
- Provide services outside the authorized location.
- Provide services outside the authorized time.
- Work private hours for a Stride HealthCare participant.
- Accept money, gifts, loans, or property from a participant.
- Use participant money, cards, checks, or accounts except as specifically approved.
- Take photos, videos, or recordings of a participant.
- Share participant information.
- Discuss participant care with unauthorized people.

Never Perform These Tasks

Caregivers must not perform medical or skilled tasks.

Caregivers must not:

- Administer medication.
- Give injections.
- Perform wound care.
- Change wound dressings.
- Perform catheter care.
- Perform feeding tube care.
- Perform tracheostomy care.
- Adjust oxygen or medical equipment.
- Diagnose symptoms.
- Give medical advice.
- Make medical decisions.
- Perform physical therapy.
- Lift a participant after a fall unless directed by emergency responders or approved by Stride HealthCare.
- Force care.
- Restrain a participant.
- Sign legal, medical, or financial documents for a participant.

When in doubt, stop and call the office.

15.2 Office Contact Information

Caregivers are responsible for using the correct contact method when communicating with Stride HealthCare.

Caregivers should save the office number and email in their phone and keep this information available during every shift.

Stride HealthCare Contact Information

Office Phone: 864-438-4624

On-Call Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM–5:00 PM; Saturday–Sunday, 8:00 AM–5:00 PM

Email: my@stridehealthcare.org

Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM–4:00 PM

Office Closed: Saturday–Sunday

Office Closed: SC State Holidays

Office Address: 109 Fleetwood Dr, Ste D, Easley, SC 29640

If there is an immediate emergency, caregivers must call 911 first.

For non-emergency questions, caregivers should contact the office during office hours when possible.

For urgent scheduling, participant safety, shift coverage, incident, EVV, or reporting concerns outside office hours, caregivers should use the on-call process.

Caregivers must not delay reporting an urgent concern because they are unsure which contact method to use.

15.3 Emergency Reporting Guide

Caregivers must report emergencies, incidents, and serious concerns quickly and accurately.

This guide explains the basic order of action. It does not replace full policies in this manual.

Step 1: Protect Immediate Safety

If there is immediate danger, the caregiver must move to safety if possible and call 911.

The caregiver should not place themselves in danger.

Step 2: Call 911 When Needed

Call 911 for medical emergencies, serious injuries, fire, violence, unsafe weapons, life-threatening symptoms, serious falls, or immediate danger.

Caregivers must not wait for office approval before calling 911 during an emergency.

Step 3: Contact the Office

After emergency help is requested, the caregiver must contact the office as soon as safely possible.

The caregiver should provide:

- Caregiver name.
- Participant name.
- Location.
- What happened.

- Whether 911 was called.
- Whether Emergency Medical Services, police, or fire department responded.
- Participant's current condition.
- Whether the participant was transported.
- Whether the caregiver is safe.
- Any instructions received from emergency responders.

Step 4: Follow Instructions

Caregivers must follow instructions from emergency responders and the office.

Caregivers must not perform medical tasks, make medical decisions, or provide information they do not know.

Step 5: Document the Event

Caregivers must document the event as instructed by the office.

Documentation should be factual and should include what the caregiver observed, what happened, who was contacted, what actions were taken, and any instructions received.

Caregivers must not include guesses, blame, gossip, opinions, or disrespectful language.

Step 6: Follow Up

The caregiver must cooperate with any follow-up requested by Stride HealthCare.

Follow-up may include:

- Incident documentation.
- Written statement.
- EVV correction.
- Scheduling update.
- Safety review.
- Retraining.
- Investigation cooperation.
- Return-to-work documentation, if the caregiver was injured.

Caregivers must not hide, delay, or minimize emergency information.

15.4 Policy Acknowledgment Requirement

Caregivers are required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of Stride HealthCare policies.

The caregiver manual is the main policy reference. The separate Caregiver Acknowledgment Packet contains the forms caregivers must complete and sign.

Caregivers may be required to sign acknowledgments for:

- Caregiver manual receipt.
- Confidentiality and HIPAA.
- EVV and timekeeping.
- Scope of care.
- Transportation.
- Drug-free workplace.
- Non-solicitation and confidential company information.
- Training and competency requirements.
- Any other acknowledgment required by Stride HealthCare.

Signing an acknowledgment means the caregiver confirms they received the information, had the opportunity to ask questions, and understands they are responsible for following the policy.

A caregiver's refusal to sign an acknowledgment does not remove the caregiver's responsibility to follow company policy.

Failure to complete required acknowledgments may result in delay of assignment, removal from shifts, corrective action, or termination.

Stride HealthCare may update acknowledgment forms when policies, laws, Medicaid requirements, licensing standards, or company procedures change.

15.5 Revision Log

Stride HealthCare may revise this manual as needed.

Policy updates may be made because of company needs, participant safety, Medicaid requirements, licensing standards, legal requirements, operational changes, technology changes, or quality improvement.

Caregivers are responsible for following the most current version of the manual and any updated policy instructions issued by Stride HealthCare. **The electronic version is the original and should only be used.**

If an updated policy conflicts with an older version of this manual, the most current policy or instruction controls.

Version	Effective Date	Section(s) Updated	Summary of Change	Approved By
1.0	2026-06-25	Full Manual	Initial caregiver reference manual issued.	William Standridge