



## APPENDIX 1 - STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT<sup>1</sup>

### PRINCIPLES

1. Our school affirms the dignity of every person, the nobility of the pursuit of truth and acquisition of knowledge, and the importance of fostering the kind of education necessary for citizens to engage freely, respectfully, and responsibly in their communities. The freedom to learn and to teach, and the commitment to equal access for all, is implicit on our commitment to human personhood and the pursuit of truth, and essential to educating citizens.
2. Our primary concern is the care of our students and their growth in intellectual, moral, and spiritual virtue. Employees will therefore attend carefully to their own intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth, and will seek to exercise the best judgment and integrity in their professional practices and interpersonal interactions.
3. In all things, the commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself must prevail in all our dealings, professional and personal.
4. Care for our students requires that faculty and staff:
  - Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.
  - Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
  - Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
  - Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
  - Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
  - Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
  - Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, handicapping condition, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
  - Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
  - Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
5. Because of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the community, employees of our school must display the highest degree of ethical conduct. This commitment requires that our employees:
  - Shall maintain honesty and integrity in all professional dealings.
  - Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Rule 6A-10.081 of Florida Administrative Code entitled "Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida" and accessed at:<http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-practices/code-of-ethics-principles-of-professio.shtml>

- Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
- Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct which unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly processes of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and, further, shall make reasonable effort to assure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination.
- Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

## **TRAINING REQUIREMENT**

All instructional personnel and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct.

### **Reporting Misconduct by Instructional Personnel and Administrators**

All employees and administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors.

- Reports of misconduct of employees should be made to the employee's supervisor or to the Dean.
- Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to the Dean.
- Reports of misconduct committed by the Dean should be made to the Board of Governors.
- Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services.

Policies and procedures for reporting misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted in the school workroom.

### **Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect<sup>2</sup>**

All employees and agents have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Call 1-800-96-ABUSE or report online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

#### **Signs of Physical Abuse**

The child may have unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, or other injuries; broken bones; or burns. A child experiencing physical abuse may seem withdrawn or depressed, seem afraid to go home or may run away, shy away from physical contact, be aggressive, or wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries.

#### **Signs of Sexual Abuse**

The child may have torn, stained or bloody underwear, trouble walking or sitting, pain or itching in genital area, or a sexually transmitted disease. A child experiencing sexual abuse may have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively, fear a particular person, seem withdrawn or depressed, gain or lose weight suddenly, shy away from physical contact, or run away from home.

#### **Signs of Neglect**

The child may have unattended medical needs, little or no supervision at home, poor hygiene, or appear underweight. A child experiencing neglect may be frequently tired or hungry, steal food, or appear overly needy for adult attention.

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 39 (ss. 39.201-206) of the Florida Statutes for more detailed information about mandatory reporting.

### **Patterns of Abuse**

Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

### **Liability Protections**

Any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in any act authorized or required by law, or reporting in good faith any instance of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the department or any law enforcement agency, shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise result by reason of such action. (F.S. 39.203)

An employer who discloses information about a former or current employee to a prospective employer of the former or current employee upon request of the prospective employer or of the former or current employee is immune from civil liability for such disclosure or its consequences unless it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that the information disclosed by the former or current employer was knowingly false or violated any civil right of the former or current employee protected under F.S. Chapter 760. (F.S. 768.095)