

Pinewood Christian Academy

Policy on Ethical Conduct of Instructional Personnel, School Staff, and School Administrators

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

As a representative of the church and school, personnel and administrators must demonstrate and uphold standards of ethical conduct both in and outside of the classroom. As a role model to students, instructional personnel, educational support employees, and school administrators have a duty, at all times, to adhere to the following Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida.

1. The educator values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all. Obligation to the school community requires that the individual:
 - a. take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated
 - b. not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression
 - c. not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage
 - d. accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment
 - e. offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages

2. The educator's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential. The educator will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity. Obligation to the student requires that the individual:
 - a. 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
 - b. not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning
 - c. not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view
 - d. not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program
 - e. not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement
 - f. not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights
 - g. not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, handicapping condition, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination
 - h. not use profane, offensive, or explosive language in the presence of students
 - i. not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage
 - j. keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

3. Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of other members of the community, the educator strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct. Obligation to the profession of education requires that the individual:
 - a. maintain honesty in all professional dealings
 - b. not deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization on the basis of race, color, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, handicapping condition, or social and family background
 - c. not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities
 - d. 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, make reasonable effort to assure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination
 - e. not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague
 - f. not use coercive means or promising special treatment to influence professional judgments of colleagues
 - g. not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications
 - h. not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities
 - i. not make any fraudulent statement nor fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position
 - j. not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant nor misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment
 - k. provide upon the request of the certificated individual a written statement of specific reason for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment
 - l. not assist entry into nor continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with these Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida and other applicable Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules
 - m. self-report within forty-eight (48) hours to appropriate authorities (as determined by the church and school) any arrests/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance – such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory
 - n. self-report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or *Nolo Contendere* for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within forty-eight (48) hours after the final judgment (when handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, the church and school shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of Sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), Florida Statutes)
 - o. report to appropriate authorities any known allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 1012.795(1), Florida Statutes

- p. seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported any allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 1012.795(1), Florida Statutes
 - q. comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission
 - r. cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate
4. In accordance with section 39.201, Florida Statutes, any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, or that a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Central Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.
- a) Instructional personnel, educational support employees, and/or school administrators may report such information to DCF in unison, but reporting to another school employee does not fulfill the legal obligation to report to DCF.
 - b) A person who is required by statute to report known or suspected abuse or neglect and fails to do so, is subject to disciplinary action by the employer, by the State Department of Education and/or through criminal prosecution.
 - c) Signs of physical abuse may include 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.
 - d) Signs of sexual abuse may include 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.
 - e) Signs of neglect may include 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.
 - f) Patterns of abuse usually involve 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. In section 39.01(44), Florida Statutes, an act of "Neglect" occurs when a child is deprived of, or is allowed to be deprived of, necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment or a child is permitted to live in an environment when such deprivation or environment causes the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired or to be in danger of being significantly impaired.
 - g) In section 39.01(47), Florida Statutes, "Other person responsible for a child's welfare" includes the child's legal guardian or foster parent; an employee of any school, public or private child day care center, residential home, institution, facility, or agency; a law enforcement officer employed in any facility, service, or program for children that is operated or contracted by the Department of Juvenile Justice; or any other person legally responsible for the child's welfare in a residential setting; and also includes an adult sitter or relative entrusted with a child's care.

Reporting Abuse and/or Misconduct, and Liability Protections

In accordance with section 1012.795(1)(b) Florida Statutes all employees, educational support 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.”

In accordance with section 39.203, Florida Statutes, any person who reports in good faith any instance of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the Department of Children and Families or any law enforcement agency, shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise result by reason of such action.

*Alleged misconduct by an instructional personnel or school staff must be reported to the Head of School, Jason Borko, at ext. 201 or jason.borko@pcaknights.org. Alleged misconduct by a school administrator must be reported to the senior pastor, JD Funyak, at ext. 101 or jd@pinewoodchurch.org. **Policies and procedures for reporting misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted on the wall above the copier in the office and on our website at www.pcaknights.org/current-families***

Instructional personnel, educational support employees, or school administrators who fail to report abuse or misconduct shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and revocation of their Florida Educator Certificate.

An employer may disclose 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 and 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).