

Standards of Ethical Conduct The Learning Foundation of Florida

(Adapted from the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida)

1. Our school 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.
2. Our primary concern is the student and the development of the student's potential. Employees will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.
3. Concern for the student requires that our instructional personnel:
 - a. 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.
 - b. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
 - c. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
 - d. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
 - e. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
 - f. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
 - g. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
 - h. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
 - i. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
4. Aware 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:
 - a. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
 - b. 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.
 - c. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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 Debra J. Thornby.

Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to Palm Beach Professional Standards (561-434-8000)

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 Teacher's Handbook.

Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect 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.

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)

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

- You set the stage for a successful experience by being prompt, neat, patient, honest, flexible, enthusiastic, and accepting.
- Maintain professional barrier between yourself and your student and do not discuss your personal life with students.
- Consider the effect of your comments being taken out of context and the potential for them to be misinterpreted.
- Don't do anything you wouldn't do if your director/administrator was observing you.
- Plan to spend the entire time working with the students under your supervision. **No Personal work of any kind should be done on company time.**
- Cell phone should only be used as an emergency communication tool. Please put your cell phones on silent or vibrate, a ringing phone is a distraction to your students. Provide your family with our school numbers so they can reach you in case of emergency.
- **Theft of time is a true violation of TLFF policy and an infraction of your contract.**
- Do not be under the influence of any substance which impairs your judgment while in the presence of students or any activity which you are representing the school.
- As you work with students, refrain from discriminating on the basis of race, sex, religion, or disability.
- Be a loyal and cooperative member of the school staff.
- Maintain a professional attitude towards your work.
- Encourage the students to do their best, commend them on their work as is appropriate, **BE FIRM BUT FAIR.**
- **Do not** supply students or parents with your personal cell phone numbers unless authorized by administration for specific purposes. All incoming phone calls are to go through the office 561-795-6886.
- At all times, you will set a positive example for the students by dressing in good taste. Any unusual mode of dress i.e.: casual shorts, tank tops, midriffs, hats, etc. are not acceptable.
- Know the policies/rules and content of the Student Manual. If you don't know the law of the land – it is hard to implement it.



**ES RESPONSABILIDAD DE TODOS
REPORTAR EL ABUSO INFANTIL
1.800.962.2873**

Cada año en Florida, miles de niños son víctimas de abuso infantil, el cual puede tomar la forma de abuso físico o sexual, negligencia, abandono o maltrato mental. Muchos continúan sufriendo debido a que el abuso nunca se reportó. Según la ley de Florida, cualquier persona que sospeche del abuso o negligencia de un niño tiene la responsabilidad de reportarlo.

Señales de abuso:

- Temor inusual
- Falta de higiene o vestimenta inapropiada
- Lesiones frecuentes
- Retraso en el desarrollo emocional, intelectual o del lenguaje
- Trastornos de alimentación
- Mecerse, dolor autoinfligido
- Trastornos del sueño, orinarse en la cama
- Ausencia de contacto visual, poca socialización
- Mal comportamiento en la escuela
- Cicatrices y moretones sin explicación
- Malnutrición
- Muchas ausencias escolares

LLAME AL 911 PARA EMERGENCIAS

Cómo reportar el abuso:

Teléfono 1.800.962.2873 Fax 1.800.914.0004

TDD (para sordomudos) 1.800.453.5145

En línea en www.MyFLFamilies.com



**REPORTING CHILD ABUSE IS
EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY**
1.800.962.2873

Every year in Florida, thousands of children are subjected to child abuse, which can take the form of physical or sexual abuse, neglect, abandonment or mental injury. Too many continue to suffer because the abuse is never reported. Under Florida law, anyone who suspects a child may be abused or neglected has a responsibility to report it.

Signs that a child may be a victim of abuse:

- Unusual fearfulness
- Lack of hygiene or inappropriate dress
- Delayed emotional, intellectual or language development
- Frequent injuries
- Feeding disorders
- Rocking, self-inflicted pain
- Sleep disorders, bed-wetting
- Lack of eye contact, poor socialization
- Acting out in school
- Unexplained scars or bruises
- Malnutrition
- Many school absences


CALL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

How to report abuse:

Telephone 1.800.962.2873

Fax 1.800.914.0004 TDD 1.800.453.5145

Online at www.MyFLFamilies.com



CHILD ABUSE

Look for the signs

Dial 1-800-96-ABUSE

Signs of Physical Abuse

The child may have unexplained:

- bruises, welts, cuts or other injuries
- broken bones
- 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
- 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
- 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
- run away from home

Signs of Neglect

The child may have:

- unattended medical needs
- little or no supervision at home
- poor hygiene
- appear underweight

A child experiencing neglect may:

- be frequently tired or hungry
- steal food
- appear overly needy for adult attention

Look for the Patterns

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.

If a child tells YOU about abuse:

Be a good listener. Show that you understand and believe what the child tells you. Encourage, but don't pressure him/her to talk. Ask open ended questions.

Be supportive. Tell the child he/she did the right thing by coming to you. Stress that he/she is not to blame. Let the child know that you want to help.

Don't overreact. This can frighten the child or prevent him/her from telling you more. Do not talk negatively about the suspected abuser in front of the child.

Document and report it. Document your conversation as soon as you can. If possible, write down the child's exact words.

Don't delay. Never assume someone else will report the abuse. The sooner it's reported, the sooner the child and their family can be helped.

WHO MUST REPORT ABUSE?

Doctors
Nurses
Social Workers

Police Officers
Child Care Workers
Any Witnesses

Any/All School Personnel

Call or Report it online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>



**FLORIDA STATUTES
AND RULES**

Florida Statutes s. 1006.061 states all employees and agents of the district school board, charter schools and private schools that accept scholarship students, have an obligation to report misconduct by an instructional personnel member or school administrator

Florida Statutes s. 1012.33 outlines disciplinary procedures regarding district employment contracts with instructional personnel staff, supervisors and school principals

Florida Statutes s. 1012.795 provides the Education Practices Commission the authority to issue disciplinary action against an individual's Florida Educator certificate

Florida Statutes s. 1012.796 provides authority for the Department of Education to investigate and prosecute allegations of educator misconduct

Florida Statutes s. 1012.01 defines public school instructional personnel, administrative personnel, school volunteers, education support employees and managers

State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.001 defines the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida

State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.006 defines the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida

**FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION:**

CONTACT:

Florida Department of Education
Office of Professional Practices Services
Turlington Building
325 West Gaines Street
(850)245-0438

www.myfloridateacher.com

{DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION}

Debra J. Thornby
O - 561-795-6886
C - 561-386-3790

**Identifying
& Reporting
Professional
Misconduct**

"Teaching is the profession that teaches all the other professions."

Author Unknown

Florida Department of Education
Office of Professional Practices Services

**THE COLLEGE SENIOR
MAY BE THE MOST
MISCONDUCTIVE
BE RESPONSIBLE!**

- being alone with a student in dark or closed room or secluded area
- behaving in an overly friendly or familiar way or failing to maintain an appropriate professional boundary with a student
- using forceful or unnecessary physical contact with a student
- administering discipline not compliant with district policy
- accepting or offering of gifts for return of a favor or privilege from students or colleagues
- badgering or habitually teasing a student
- mocking or belittling a student
- chronically embarrassing a student
- displaying prejudice or bigotry against a student
- suspicion of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- failing to properly supervise students or to ensure student safety
- cheating, falsifying information or testing violations
- retaliating against a student or colleague for reporting misconduct
- bantering or engaging in colloquial or slang communications with a student
- directing or using profane, offensive, or explosive language in the presence of students
- making lewd or suggestive comments or overtures toward a student or colleague

Apply the Itimus test

1. If you feel uncomfortable
2. If you question the person's motives or actions
3. If you are unsure

Protect the students and yourself and report.

**HOW TO REPORT
MISCONDUCT**

- Report allegations or suspicion of misconduct by an instructional personnel member to your school administrator or district contact
- Report allegations or suspicion of misconduct by your school administrator to your district contact
- Document the activities or details of the event
- Secure evidence (if applicable)

**WHO SHOULD REPORT
MISCONDUCT?**

All employees and agents of a district school board, charter school or private school have a duty to report misconduct

If you are aware of or observe misconduct

**REPORT IT
IMMEDIATELY!**

WHO SHOULD YOU REPORT?

- Classroom teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Substitute teachers
- Librarians, guidance counselors and social workers
- Career specialists and school psychologists
- Principals, Assistant Principals and Deans

**If someone tells you
about misconduct, be
a LEADER:**

- Listen**
- Evaluate**
- Act Immediately**
- Document**
- Encourage
Report**

**FAILURE TO REPORT
MISCONDUCT**

Possible penalties for instructional personnel or site administrators who fail to report misconduct may include:

- Written Reprimand
- Suspension with or without pay
- Termination of employment
- Discipline/Sanctions on an educator's certificate

"A teacher affects
eternity...he can never tell
where his influence stops."

~Henry B. Adams

of guilt nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, shall 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 48 hours after the final judgement. When handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, school districts shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of Sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), Florida Statutes.

- (n) Shall 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.
- (o) Shall 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.
- (p) Shall comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission.
- (q) Shall, as the supervising administrator, cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

State Board of Education Rule 68-1.001, FAC

The Code of Ethics of 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.

(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 judgement and integrity.

(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.

Adams v. State of Florida Professional
Practices Council, 406 So 2nd 1170 Fla.
1st DCA 1981

**"By virtue of their leadership
capacity, teachers are
traditionally held to a high
moral standard in
a community."**

For further information call or write:

Bureau of Educator Recruitment,
Development and Retention
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 124
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850)245-0441, SUNCOM 205-0441

The Code of Ethics
and
The Principles of
Professional Conduct
of The Education
Profession in Florida

Professionalism Through Integrity



Florida Department of Education
wwwfldoe.org

The Principles of Professional Conduct of The Education Profession in Florida

(1) The following disciplinary rule shall constitute the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.

(2) Violation of any of these principles shall subject the individual to revocation or suspension of the individual educator's certificate, or the other penalties as provided by law.

(3) **Obligation to the student requires that the individual:**

- (a) 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.
- (b) Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
- (c) Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
- (d) Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
- (e) Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- (f) Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
- (g) Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.

(h) Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.

(i) Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

(4) **Obligation to the public requires that the individual:**

(a) Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated.

(b) Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.

(c) Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.

(d) Shall accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgement.

(e) Shall offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.

(5) **Obligation to the profession of education requires that the individual:**

(a) Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.

(b) 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.

(c) Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.

(d) 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.

(e) Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

(f) Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgement of colleagues.

(g) Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.

(h) Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.

(i) Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position.

(j) Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.

(k) Shall provide upon the request of the certified 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) Shall not assist entry into or continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with these Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida and other applicable Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules.

(m) Shall self-report within 48 hours to appropriate authorities (as determined by district) 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