



ETHICS – CODE OF ETHICS OF THE EDUCATION PROFESSION IN FLORIDA

Florida Department of Education (FDOE) requires that all instructional personnel or school administrators in any position that requires direct contact with students comply with policies establishing ethical standards of conduct for instructional personnel and school administrators.

6B-1.001 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 judgment 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.

Specific Authority 229.053(1), 231.546(2)(b) FS. Law Implemented 231.546(2)(b) FS. History - New 3-24-65, Amended 8-9-69, Promulgated 12-5-74, Amended 8-12-81, 7-6-82, Formerly 6B-1.01.

6B-1.006 Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida.

1. The following disciplinary rule shall constitute the Principles of Professional Conduct for 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, job function, 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 (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law, 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 judgment.
 - 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 judgments 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 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. 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 for the Education Profession in Florida and other applicable Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules.
- m. Shall self-report within forty-eight (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 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 forty-eight (48) hours after the final judgment. When handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, JSA 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.

Specific Authority 229.053(1), 231.546(2)(b) FS. Law Implemented 231.546(2), 231.28 FS. History - New 7-682, Amended 12-20-83, Formerly 6B-1.06, Amended 8-10-92, 12-29-98.

The code of ethics established for Florida certified educators is available on the Office of Professional Practices Services Web site: (http://www.fldoe.org/edstandards/code_of_ethics.asp)

1. The private school standards of ethical conduct must establish the **duty to report**, and **procedures for reporting**, alleged employee or administrator misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. At any time, the Abuse Hotline can be called to report any misconduct.



WHERE TO REPORT: CHILD ABUSE - LOOK FOR THE SIGNS -DIAL 1-800-96-ABUSE

What to Report: Signs of Physical Abuse The child may have unexplained:

- bruises, welts, cuts, or other injuries such as 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
 - fear a particular person
 - seem withdrawn or depressed
 - gain or lose weight suddenly
 - shy away from physical contact
 - run away from home

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

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 Department of Education (FDOE) ensures that all instructional personnel or school administrators who report in "Good Faith" any instance of child abuse shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability.

6B-1.001 Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida.

The standards must provide an explanation of the employee liability protections provided under ss. 39.203 and 768.095, F.S.39.203-Immunity from liability in cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

(1)(a) Any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in any act authorized or required by this chapter, 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.



(b) Except as provided in this chapter, nothing contained in this section shall be deemed to grant immunity, civil or criminal, to any person suspected of having abused, abandoned, or neglected a child, or committed any illegal act upon or against a child.

(2)(a) No resident or employee of a facility serving children may be subjected to reprisal or discharge because of his or her actions in reporting abuse, abandonment, or neglect pursuant to the requirements of this section.

(b) Any person making a report under this section shall have a civil cause of action for appropriate compensatory and punitive damages against any person who causes detrimental changes in the employment status of such reporting party by reason of his or her making such report. Any detrimental change made in the residency or employment status of such person, including, but not limited to, discharge, termination, demotion, transfer, or reduction in pay or benefits or work privileges, or negative evaluations within a prescribed period of time shall establish a rebuttable presumption that such action was retaliatory.

768.095 - Employer immunity from liability; disclosure of information regarding former or current employees.

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 chapter 760. *History.-s. 1, ch. 91-165; s. 17, ch. 99-225*

Abide by all school policies and procedures with steadfast adherence to the following:

Immediately report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Florida Department of Children and Families Toll-Free Hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE)

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.

Instructional personnel and 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.

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.

In section 39.01(2), Florida Statutes, the term "Abuse" means any willful act or threatened act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual injury or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired. Abuse of a child includes acts or omissions. Corporal discipline of a child by a parent or legal custodian for disciplinary purposes does not in itself constitute abuse when it does not result in harm to the child.

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.

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.

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.

Immediately report to the Executive Director any alleged misconduct that affects the health, safety or welfare of a student, by other instructional personnel or school administrators

In accordance with section 1012.795(1)(b) Florida Statutes, any instructional personnel or school administrator must report alleged misconduct that affects the health, safety or welfare of a student by instructional personnel or school administrators. If instructional personnel or school administrators have knowledge of a violation of section 1012.795 or the Principles of



Professional Conduct or the district code of conduct, designated employees shall immediately report the nature of the misconduct to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director is Michelle Dunham.

Instructional personnel or school administrators who fail to report misconduct of other instructional personnel or school administrators that affect the health, safety or welfare of students shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and revocation of their Florida Educator Certificate.

Prohibition of Bullying and Harassment

All students and school employees have the right to an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The district will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and/or harassment, as defined by district policy and section 1006.147, Florida Statutes, are prohibited.

Bullying means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve but is not limited to:

1. Teasing
2. Social Exclusion
3. Threat
4. Intimidation
5. Stalking
6. Physical violence
7. Theft
8. Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
9. Public humiliation
10. Destruction of property

Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

1. Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying and Harassment also include:

Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.

Perpetuation of conduct listed in paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause physical harm to a student or school employee by:

- a. Incitement or coercion;
- b. Accessing or knowingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system; or
- c. Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.

School Contact: Michelle Dunham
Title: Founder & Executive Director
Phone: 904-732-4343
Email: report@jsakids.org



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