

The Christ School Policy Handbook

7.16 Standards of Ethical Conduct

The Christ School is committed to providing a work environment governed by the highest ethical and legal standards. In all situations you are expected to conduct your activities with integrity, ethically and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Part of maintaining an ethical workplace is providing employees the opportunity to provide honest feedback. The School will not tolerate retaliation of any kind against an employee who reports in good faith a violation of law or of this policy.

The Christ School encourages you to report any actual or potential violations of applicable laws or regulations and any unethical, dishonest or improper conduct to your supervisor, another member of management and/or the Head School of The Christ School, Inc. If you are uncertain as to whether there are any laws or regulations that may impact your work, you are responsible for requesting guidance from your supervisor, another member of management and/or the Head School of The Christ School, Inc.

GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

In order to conduct the operations of The Christ School efficiently and professionally, all employees are to follow the rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all employees and the School. All employees are expected to act in a professional manner at all times including during interactions with customers, co-workers, management and the general public.

Although it is not possible to list all forms of inappropriate behavior and conduct, the following are examples that are considered inappropriate and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment:

- Falsifying employment or other School records;
- Violating the Anti-Harassment policy;
- Violating certain state, federal or local laws and regulations;
- Violating security or safety rules or failing to observe safety rules or safety practices; failing to wear required safety equipment; tampering with equipment or safety equipment;
- Soliciting gratuities from customers or clients;
- Displaying excessive or unexcused absenteeism or tardiness;
- Possessing firearms, weapons or explosives on School property without authorization, in violation of policy or while on duty;
- Using the School's property and supplies, particularly for personal purposes in an excessive, unnecessary or unauthorized way;
- Negligent damage of property;
- Violating the Violence in the Workplace policy;
- Violating the Drug-Free Workplace policy;
- Committing theft or unauthorized possession of School property or the property of fellow employees; possessing or removing any School property, including documents, from the premises without prior permission from management; using School equipment or

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property for personal reasons without proper authorization; using School equipment for profit;

- Giving confidential or proprietary information to competitors or other organizations, or to unauthorized employees; working for a competing business while an employee of the School; breaking confidentiality of personal information;
- Engaging in abusive conduct, or bullying, such as using obscene, abusive or threatening language or gestures or other verbal or physical conduct a reasonable person would find threatening, intimidating, or humiliating;
- Engaging in malicious acts such as gossip and/or rumors, derogatory remarks, insults, epithets; engaging in behavior which creates discord and lack of harmony;
- Interfering with another employee on the job, restricting work output or encouraging others to do the same, unwarranted sabotage or undermining another's work;
- Soliciting, selling, or collecting funds for any purpose while on working time (not including meals and authorized breaks). employees who are not on working time shall not interfere with the work of employees who are on working time.

Where appropriate, supervisors will follow a process of progressive employee discipline. Before or during application of any discipline, employees may be given an opportunity to relate their version of the incident or problem and provide an explanation. Examples of progressive employee discipline include:

- Verbal Counseling - A conversation with an employee explaining that the employee's conduct or poor performance is unacceptable, and repeated or continued unacceptable conduct or performance will result in more severe disciplinary action. A record of the notice of the verbal counseling may be made and retained in the employee's personnel file.
- Written Counseling - A written document or memo that describes the unacceptable conduct or performance of the employee and specifies needed changes or improvements. A copy of the written counseling generally will be retained in the employee's personnel file.
- Termination - If an employee fails to follow acceptable conduct or performance standards, the School may terminate the employee's employment.

Depending on the specific circumstances, the School may suspend or terminate an employee without prior discipline, or without following a particular order of discipline.

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:

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- 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, 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.
 - 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, 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

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aggression, and accepting or offering favors. Reports of misconduct of employees should be made to the Head of School and the Director of Lower School or the Director of Middle School. Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to the Head of School and the Board of Trustees.

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 this handbook.

Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect

See [6.2 Child Abuse Reporting Policy](#) for more information regarding child abuse, abandonment, or neglect reporting.

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).