



Esther's School

Standards of Ethical Conduct

As a representative of Esther's School, personnel and administrators must demonstrate and uphold standards of ethical conduct both in and outside of the classroom. As stewards of Esther's School and its core values, and as role models to students, all personnel must:

1. Value 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. Have as their primary concern the student and the development of the student's potential. All personnel 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, all personnel strive to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.
4. Concern for the student requires that our instructional staff:
 - 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.
5. Be 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. This commitment requires that our personnel:
 - 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.
 - f. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
 - g. 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.
 - h. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.

- i. 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.
- j. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague
- k. Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgments of colleagues.
- l. Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.
- m. Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.
- n. 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.
- o. Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
- p. 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.
- q. 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.
- r. Shall self-report within forty-eight (48) hours to appropriate authorities (as designated by Esther's 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. 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, Esther's School shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of Sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), Florida Statutes.
- s. 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.
- t. 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.
- u. Shall comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission.
- v. Shall, as the supervising administrator, cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

Training Requirement

All instructional personnel, educational support employees, and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct. Training is conducted with all staff annually and at date of hire.

Reporting Misconduct by Instructional Personnel, Administrators or other Staff

All employees, educational support employees, and administrators have an obligation to immediately report any alleged misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student.

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 School's code of conduct, designated employees shall immediately report the nature of the misconduct to the School designee. 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.

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:

Natasha Griffin, Superintendent
Phone: 407-738-7976
natasha.griffin@estherschool.net

Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to:

Esther Berry, Founder
Phone: 727-544-4700
esther.berry@estherschool.net

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 administration office and Principals' offices and on our Web site at:
<https://www.estherschool.net/reporting-misconduct/>.

Confidentiality Agreement Prohibited

In accordance with section 1001.42(6), Florida Statutes, neither the school nor any employee of the school may enter into a confidentiality agreement, written or verbal, with an instructional personnel or school administrator who resigns, is terminated, or resigns in lieu of termination due to allegations, in whole or in part, of misconduct related to the health safety or welfare of a student. Any part of an

agreement that has the purpose or effect of concealing misconduct which affects the health, safety or welfare of a student is void and shall not be enforced.

Reference Checks

In accordance with section 1001.42(6), Florida Statutes, neither the school nor any employee of the school may provide instructional personnel or school administrators with employment references or discuss their performance with prospective employers from another educational setting without also disclosing the personnel's or administrator's misconduct.

In accordance with section 768.095, Florida Statutes, 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, Florida Statutes.

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

All personnel and agents have an affirmative duty to immediately report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Florida Department of Children and Families Toll-Free Hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE) or report online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

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.

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. "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.

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)

Recognizing Abuse or Neglect

Signs of Physical Abuse:

The child may have unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, or other injuries such as 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.

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.

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. Esther's School will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Any conduct that constitutes bullying and/or harassment is 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; or
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.