

Professional Ethics

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

Biblical ethics must be maintained by each individual staff member. At the very basis of professionalism is the biblical concept that each person is an image bearer of God, differing from the next person in personality, style, strengths, and weaknesses, yet deserving of respect. This concept is applicable to students, parents, and colleagues.

As a representative of the school and church, personnel and administrators must demonstrate and uphold standards of ethical conduct both in and outside of the classroom. As an employee and a role model to students, instructional personnel and school administrators have a duty, always, to abide by the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida.

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.

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.

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.

Florida educators shall comply with the following disciplinary principles. 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.

Obligation to the student requires that the individual:

 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

Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.

Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.

Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.

Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement

Shall not intentionally provide classroom instruction to students in kindergarten through grade 3 on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.

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.

Discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex includes subjecting any student to training or instruction that espouses, promotes, advances, inculcates, or compels such student to believe any of the concepts listed in Section 1000.05(4)(a), F.S.

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

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

(a) Obligation to the public requires that the individual:

- Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated.
- Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.
- Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.
- Shall accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment.
- Shall offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.

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

- Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
- 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.
- Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
- 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.

- Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.
- Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgments of colleagues.
- Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.
- Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.
- 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.
- Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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, school districts shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of Sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), F.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), F.S.
- 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), F.S.
- Shall comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission imposing probation, imposing a fine, or restricting the authorized scope of practice. Shall, as the supervising administrator, cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

Reporting Misconduct:

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 immediately to Elizabeth Wilson, the Director of MCP, bwilson@orangewood.org or 407-760-0054.

Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made immediately to Ashley Eveland, Director of Children's Ministries, aeveland@orangewood.org or 407-539-1500.

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 on the bulletin board in the MCP office and on our website at www.orangewood.org/MCP.

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.

The educator should 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.

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 1-80096-ABUSE or report online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

If you have any belief, concern, or thought that you have witnessed, heard, or heard about a situation possibly involving abuse, neglect, or abandonment, you must immediately report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Florida Department of Children and Families Toll-free hotline: (1-800-96ABUSE) or report online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>. This agency will determine whether or not a circumstance is truly abuse. Once a call is made to this agency, they have complete authority over the disposition of the situation 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.

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.

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.

- 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. 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
- Abandonment is a situation in which the parent or legal custodian of a child, or in the absence of a parent or legal custodian, the caregiver responsible for the child's welfare, while being able, makes no provision for the child's support and makes no effort to communicate with the child, which situation is sufficient to evidence a willful rejection of parental obligations.
- 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)

Training: All staff members must complete the DCF Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect training within the first 90 days of employment. Annually, staff members must review Child Abuse and Neglect in Florida: A Guide for Professionals pamphlet. Verification of this will be kept in the employee's file.

- When moving to another class or to the playground a head count should be done to insure all are present.
- Staff members should not be left alone with children for more than 15 minutes. When absolutely necessary, the classroom should be within the sight or hearing of another staff member while the other staff member is gone.

Check-In/Out:

- Every visitor must check in at the front desk before engaging in any activity with MCP.
- Parents and caregivers must check their child in with the Brightwheel app each day.
- Under no circumstances may a child be released to anyone other than the parent or guardian listed on the student's pick up list without express permission of the parent/guardian.

Visible:

- Windows of classrooms (opening to the hallway) should stay clear (uncovered) so that outside viewing is not blocked.
- On the playground, staff members and student assistants are encouraged to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving attention to the areas which are not easily seen.
- Directors and supervisors shall frequently and randomly stop by to observe the classrooms and other areas where children and adults are together.

Physical Touch:

Love and affection are part of MCP's ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children.

- It's best if physical contact and affection is given only in observable places when in the presence of other children and or staff members. In doing so, it is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted.
- When approached by a child physically, don't reject the child but rather, guide his or her hands to appropriate contact. When a child touches an adult in an inappropriate way unintentionally, no reference to it should be made, simply redirect his/her hand or body. If intentional, correct with the same tone as any other correction and then move on without making an issue of it.

The following are appropriate touch for small children:

- Verbal praise
- High fives
- Pats on the shoulder back and head
- Kneeling or bending down for quick hugs
- Touching hands, face, shoulders and arms
- Holding hands while walking
- Holding hands while praying
- Holding them when others are present
- Sitting beside them or behind them on the floor to assist with self-control
- Sitting on the legs of a female teacher/student assistant
- Kisses should be rare and given on top of the head
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The following are inappropriate touch for small children: (these can be used by child molesters to "groom" children for later molestation or can be, in themselves, sexual abuse):

- Touching buttocks, chest, genital area or thighs other than for diapering or toileting of young children
- Full body hugs
- Tickling
- Piggyback rides
- Wrestling
- Hugs from behind
- Any type of massage given by a child to an adult
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child
- Kisses anywhere other than the top of the head
- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child
- Any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature

Toileting/Diapering:

- Changing diapers and toileting should be done by MCP staff or the child's parents
- Changing diapers should be done in plain sight of other staff

- Children should never be left unattended on the changing table
- No child will be forced to toilet train
- Bathroom doors should remain ajar if staff are helping students in bathroom
- If in another part of the building and a child needs to use the toilet, use Women's Restroom and assist by standing outside of the stall. If the child requires assistance, the staff member should leave the stall door open as they assist the child
- All children should be instructed to wash hands after using the restroom

Discipline:

- Corporal punishment is never allowed.
- Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that could cause immediate harm to the individual or others and only the level necessary for the welfare of the child.

Appropriate warning and consequences should be given to any child who is causing a disruption or has the potential to cause harm to another child or himself

