

## **Standards of Ethical Conduct Saint Stephen's Episcopal School**

Saint Stephen's is committed to the establishment of strong controls and reasonable operating procedures while ensuring compliance with federal, state and local laws. All employees have a duty to Saint Stephen's to further its aims and goals and to work on behalf of its best interests. No employee should place him- or herself in a position where that employee's actions or personal interests may be in conflict with those of the School.

Employees are expected to use good judgment, moral character and common sense in the determination of all acts that could violate good ethical conduct or cause harm to the School, our students or fellow employees.

1. Saint Stephen's 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.
- d. 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 Head of School or your Division Director. Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to the Head of School, or in the event that such conduct involves the Head of School, to your Division Director and Human Resources

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 Campus Center and on our Web site at <https://www.saintstephens.org/about-floridas-best-private-school/private-school-careers/>

**Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect.** As educational professionals, we have a responsibility to provide the children we teach with the opportunity to obtain the best education possible. We also have a legal responsibility to protect the children we educate from child abuse, neglect, and abandonment that, unfortunately, are all too frequent occurrences in today's society.

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/>.

In our capacities as educators or employees at an educational institution, at some point in our careers we are likely to come into contact with child abuse, neglect or abandonment. This prompts the question, "How do I recognize and deal with such a situation when it occurs?" This policy is designed to provide guidelines for reporting suspected child abuse, neglect, and abandonment.

**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)

For additional information, please refer to the School's Employee and Faculty Handbooks.

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

## 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 Statute 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 Principals of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida

## 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

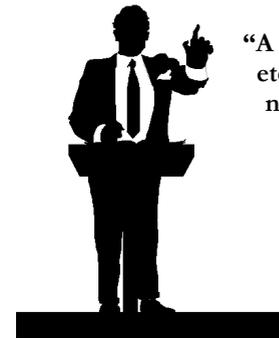
**REPORT IT IMMEDIATELY!**

## 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**:

**L**isten  
**E**valuate  
**A**ct immediately  
**D**ocument  
**E**ncourage  
**R**eport



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

~Henry B. Adams

## 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

The following behavior may be indicative of misconduct that should be reported:

- 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 litmus 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.

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

To report suspected misconduct, contact your  
Division Director or Head of School

# IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT

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

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



Florida Department of Education  
Office of Professional Practices Services

***“Teaching is the profession that teaches all the other professions.”***

*--Author Unknown*