

CODE OF ETHICS FOR TEACHERS

The Christian community, including that part involved in education, has always strived to identify how Christians should live. Scripture directs us to faithful responses to God in daily affairs, shaping those responses towards what they ought to be. Ethics exist to remind humans of their encounter with God, who is the light illuminating all their actions. This light encourages us to reflect goodness, compassion and understanding in the work place, thus fostering maturity and growth in our ethical behavior and decision-making.

We do this by

- Encouraging one another
- Respecting one another
- Trusting one another
- Living and working in harmony with each other
- Accepting mutual responsibility for each other
- Serving one another in love
- Submitting to one another
- Praying for one another.

(See Hebrews 10:24, 25; Romans 15:2-7; Ephesians 5:21; Romans 12: Galatians 5:13, 22.)

All relationships should be guided by the principles set forth in I Corinthians 12 and 13. However, when breakdowns do occur, they should be dealt with promptly and honestly. Matthew 18:15-20 outlines how concerns should be handled. Grievances must first be brought to the person involved. If an issue cannot be resolved in this manner, only then should a third party be brought in, i.e., principal, pastor, or board.

Throughout any stage in resolving conflicts, *respect, honesty, and love* must be key elements.

Principles of Professional Conduct with students

We must

- Show loving concern and respect for the well-being of all students.
- Provide a learning environment that will allow all students to grow and develop.
- Provide high quality instruction.
- Discipline in a loving, just, constructive manner and in accordance with school policy.
- Remain sensitive to the diversity of expressions of Christian living.
- Model Christ-like attitudes and behavior.
- Encourage the expression of personal faith in Christ.
- Forgive and model Biblical conflict resolution.

Principles of Professional Conduct with other staff members

We must

- Be supportive and upbuilding of each other in public and private conversations.

Resolve all differences and address criticisms in a fair, loving, constructive, and confidential manner.

Participate willingly in building a staff team, recognizing the contributions of all staff members as part of the body of Christ.

Be aware of others as total persons, encouraging healthful and balanced living.

Pray for and encourage one another.

Principles of Professional Conduct with administrators and board members

We must

Respect the responsibility and legitimate authority of administrators and board members.

Seek to maintain open and honest communication.

Communicate to the administrators conflicts which cannot be resolved by personal discussion.

Encourage and support the administrators and board members in their responsibilities.

Be supportive and upbuilding of the administrators and board members in public and private conversations.

Principles of Professional Conduct with parents

We must

Respect the primary authority and responsibility of parents for their children.

Seek to maintain open and honest communication.

Resolve all differences and address criticisms in a fair, loving, constructive, and confidential manner.

Be supportive and upbuilding of parents in public and private conversations.

Pray with and for them.

ETHICS IN EDUCATION POLICY

PURPOSE:

To comply with the requirements established by the Florida Ethics in Education Act, Florida Statute § 1002.421, through the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of a policy that regulates and creates ethical standards in employment and notifies all staff of their obligations to report child abuse.

APPLICABLE LAWS

Florida Statute §220.187

Florida Statute §1002.39

Florida Statute §1002.41

Florida Statute §1012.01

Florida Statute §943.0542

Florida Statute §39.203

Florida Statute §768.095

Florida Statute §1001.10(5)

Florida Statute §1012.315

DEFINITIONS:

1. *Staff with direct student contact* means any employee, volunteer, or contracted personnel, who has unsupervised access to a scholarship student for whom the private school is responsible.
2. *Teachers* means staff members assigned the professional activity of instructing students in courses in classroom situations, including basic instruction, exceptional student education, career education, and adult education, including substitute teachers.
3. *School administrator* includes
 - a. School principals or school directors who are staff members performing the assigned activities as the administrative head of a school and to whom have been delegated responsibility for the coordination and administrative direction of the instructional and non-instructional activities of the school. This classification also includes career center directors.
 - b. Assistant principals who are staff members assisting the administrative head of the school. This classification also includes assistant principals for curriculum and administration.

NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE:

As a religious entity, The Shepherd's School is legally permitted to make enrollment and employment decisions based upon religious criteria, including doctrinal and lifestyle issues. It is the policy of The Shepherd's School to employ persons who subscribe without reservation to The Shepherd's School's Statement of Faith and Standards of Conduct and who are living out these doctrines and standards in all areas of their lives both at and away from ministry/school functions. TSS does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, sex (as determined at birth and not subject to change), national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

EMPLOYMENT SCREENING:

All teachers, whether paid or volunteer, will hold baccalaureate or higher degrees, have at least three (3) years of teaching experience in public or private schools, OR have special skills, knowledge, or expertise that qualifies them to provide instruction in subjects taught.

All staff members, whether paid or volunteer, who have direct student contact will undergo a state and national background screening, pursuant to Florida Statute §943.0542, by electronically filing with the Department of Law Enforcement a complete set of fingerprints taken by an authorized law enforcement agency or an employee of the private school, a school district, or a private company who is trained to take fingerprints and deny employment to or terminate an employee if he or she fails to meet the screening standards under Florida Statute §435.04. Results of the screening shall become property of The Shepherd's School.

No person having direct student contact will begin working with the school, in any capacity, without the school having first obtained a state and national background screen. Upon notification that a staff member or potential staff member has failed the background screening, the staff member or potential staff member will be immediately dismissed or denied employment.

All staff members with direct student contact will undergo background screening every five (5) years. Upon notification that a staff member has failed the background screening, the staff member will be immediately dismissed.

All potential staff members who will have direct student contact will provide past employer references as a part of their pre-employment screening process. No staff members will begin service to the ministry until the ministry has contacted or has reasonably attempted to contact all past employer references. All contact will be documented and become the property of The Shepherd's School.

All staff members with direct student contact will be screened using the following Department of Education's educator screening tools:

- The Professional Practices' Database of Disciplinary Actions Against Educators
- The Teacher Certification Database

All findings will be documented and will become the property of The Shepherd's School.

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR STAFF MEMBERS

The Shepherd's School values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of spiritual growth. Essential to the achievement of these standards is the freedom to learn and to teach in a truly Christian environment. The Shepherd's School's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential, both from an educational perspective and a spiritual perspective. The Shepherd's School will therefore strive for professional and spiritual growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity while maintaining a proper Christian testimony. 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 Shepherd's School therefore strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL AND SPIRITUAL CONDUCT FOR STAFF MEMBERS

The following disciplinary rules shall constitute The Shepherd's School's ethical standards for all staff members. Violation of any of these standards shall subject the individual to discipline and/or dismissal.

1. Obligation to the student requires that the individual:
 - a. Shall manifest by precept and example the highest Christian virtue and personal decorum, serving as a Christian Role Model both at and away from The Shepherd's School, and as an example to all in judgment, dignity, respect and Christian living;
 - b. 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;

- c. Shall not engage in personal relationships with students outside of the classroom that are inappropriate, familiar or of an immature manner;
 - d. Shall not invite students to overnight outings, whether in teacher's home or otherwise
 - e. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning;
 - f. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement;
 - g. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights;
 - h. Shall not harass any student;
 - i. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage; and
 - j. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
2. Obligation to the public requires that the individual:
- a. Shall subscribe without reservation to the Statement of Faith and the Standards of Conduct of The Shepherd's School and agree to abide by these doctrines and standards in all aspects of my life, both at and away from ministry functions;
 - b. Shall understand that the bona fide occupational qualification of being a Christian role model includes but is not limited to abstaining from all acts of homosexuality, fornication, adultery, transvestitism and deviant gender identity;
 - c. Shall be a member of Good Shepherd Church of God or another evangelical church;
 - d. Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage;
 - e. Shall accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment; and
 - f. shall offer no gratuity gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.
3. Obligation to the profession of education requires that the individual:
- a. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings;
 - b. Shall remain loyal to the ministry/school leadership and the ministry's/school's programs in word and in action;
 - c. Shall agree to fulfill all duties and responsibilities of membership in Good Shepherd Church of God or another evangelical church, including but not limited to, financially giving and supporting all endeavors of the ministry,
 - d. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct contrary to The Shepherd's School's statement of faith, 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 abstain from the abuse of controlled substances and the use of alcohol and tobacco products.
 - f. Shall not engage in any intimate sexual activity outside of a marriage between a male and a female, shall not engage in viewing pornography, and shall not make any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance;
 - g. Shall understand that homosexual conduct defined as acts or identifying

- statements, is incompatible with employment at The Shepherd's School and is a basis for dismissal;
- h. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague;
 - i. Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgments of colleagues;
 - j. Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications;
 - k. Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities;
 - l. 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;
 - m. Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment;
 - n. Shall not assist entry into or continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with this Code of Ethics.
 - o. Shall self-report within forty-eight (48) hours to appropriate authorities (as determined by the administration) 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 shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of Sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), Florida Statutes;
 - p. 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;
 - q. Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported any allegation of a violation against said employee;
 - r. Shall understand and agree that his or her responsibilities as a church member and as a member of The Shepherd's School staff are inseparable and that he or she will be immediately removed from The Shepherd's School staff if he is out of fellowship with the church, as determined at the discretion of the pastor and school board; and
 - s. Shall understand and agree that God's command for one's role as a member of the staff is for him/her to perform at the will of The Shepherd's School administration.

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.

Training Requirement All instructional personnel and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards 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 1-800-96-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.

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)

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 the principal of The Shepherd's School. Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to the lead pastor of Good Shepherd Church of God. 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 teacher's work room and on our website at www.shepherdsschool.org.