

St. John's Lutheran School

Employee Code of Professional Conduct Policy

"Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this:.....The Lord our God, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. 'There is no commandment greater than these.'" Mark 12: 30-31

Principles

The St. John's Lutheran School Code of Ethics (Incorporating the Illinois Educator Code of Ethics) contains six core principles which provide a foundation for the responsibilities and commitments of St. John's educators.

1. Responsibility to God
2. Responsibility to Students
3. Responsibility to Self
4. Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession
5. Responsibility to Parents, Families and Communities
6. Responsibility to the Illinois laws and Mandates.

RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD

The St. John's educator is first and foremost committed to following God's laws as spelled out in scriptures. As stated in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* The bible also states that you should*love your neighbor as yourself.*" *Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* Romans 13:10b.

RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS

The St. John's educator is committed to creating, promoting, and implementing a learning environment that is accessible to each student, enables students to achieve the highest academic potential, and maximizes their ability to succeed in academic and employment settings as a responsible member of society. St. John's educators:

- Embody the Standards for the School Service Personnel Certificate (23 Ill. Adm. Code 23), the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (23 Ill. Adm. Code 24), and Standards for Administrative Certification (23 Ill. Adm. Code 29), as applicable to the educator, in the learning environment;
- Respect the inherent dignity and worth of each student by assuring that the learning environment is characterized by respect and equal opportunity for each student, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, language or socio- economic status;
- Maintain a professional relationship with students at all times;

- Provide a curriculum based on high expectations for each student that addresses individual differences through the design, implementation, and adaptation of effective instruction; and
- Foster in each student the development of attributes that will enhance skills and knowledge necessary to be a contributing member of society.

RESPONSIBILITY TO SELF

The St. John's Educator is committed to establishing high professional standards for their practice and striving to meet these standards through their performance. St. John's Educators:

- Assume responsibility and accountability for their performance and continually strive to demonstrate proficiency and currency in both content knowledge and professional practice;
- Develop and implement personal and professional goals with attention to professional standards through a process of self-assessment and professional development;
- Represent their professional credentials and qualifications accurately; and
- Demonstrate a high level of professional judgment

RESPONSIBILITY TO COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

The St. John's Educator is committed to collaborating with school and district colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning. St. John's Educators:

- Collaborate with colleagues in the local school and district to meet local and state educational standards;
- Work together to create a respectful, professional and supportive school climate that allows all educators to maintain their individual professional integrity;
- Seek out and engage in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession;
- Promote participation in educational decision making processes;
- Encourage promising candidates to enter the education profession; and
- Support the preparation, induction, mentoring and professional development of educators.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PARENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

The St. John's Educator will collaborate, build trust, and respect confidentiality with parents, families, and communities to create effective instruction and learning environments for each student. St. John's Educators:

- Aspire to understand and respect the values and traditions of the diversity represented in the community and in their learning environments;
- Encourage and advocate for fair and equal educational opportunities for each student;
- Develop and maintain professional relationships with parents, families, and communities;
- Promote collaboration and support student learning through regular and meaningful communication with parents, families, and communities; and

- Cooperate with community agencies that provide resources and services to enhance the learning environment.

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE STATE LAWS AND MANDATES

The St. John's Educator is committed to supporting the Administrative and School Codes, state and federal laws and regulations that are not contrary to God's law and Holy Scripture. St. John's Educators:

- Maintain appropriate certification for employment.
- Comply with state and federal codes, laws, and regulations.

Sexual Conduct Policy (Faith's Law)

Faith's Law is named after prevention advocate and child sexual abuse survivor Faith Colson, who graduated from an Illinois high school in the early 2000s. Faith was sexually abused by a teacher at her high school. Years later, during the course of legal proceedings related to the abuse, Faith learned that several adults within her high school suspected that the teacher's relationship with her was inappropriate but did not take appropriate action to report their concerns. As a result of her experiences, Faith pushed for change to state laws related to educator sexual misconduct in K-12 schools.

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity. Proverbs
11:3

Sexual Misconduct Defined

Any act, including, but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, by an employee or agent of the school district, charter school or nonpublic school with direct contact with a student that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Such an act includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

1. A sexual or romantic invitation.
2. Dating or soliciting a date.
3. Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog.
4. Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student
5. Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.
6. A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with a student.

General Standards

The following general standards apply to all St. John's employees, volunteers, vendors, consultants and their employees, and other third-parties who interact with students.

- *In everything, set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness.* Titus 2:7

- Personal contact between students and staff members must always be appropriate to the circumstances, non-sexual and unambiguous in meaning.
- Staff members shall maintain a strictly professional relationship with students, whether on or off school property and during or outside of school hours.
- Staff members are responsible for maintaining professional and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with students at all times.
- Interactions between staff members and students should be based on mutual respect and trust.
- Staff members are responsible for treating all students consistently and in line with the educational mission of St. John's.

Most contact between students and staff is appropriate and professional. For example, it is appropriate for a teacher to address a student's concerns over an assignment after class or provide one-on-one tutoring support. However, there are instances or activities that could be considered to be invasions of appropriate boundaries and can create an actual impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. In order to protect students and staff, staff should avoid activities with students that present opportunities for inappropriate relationships or that create the appearance that the staff and student are in an inappropriate relationship.

Honor one another above yourselves. Romans 12:10b

Examples of such activities are described below and must be avoided by staff members. This list is not exhaustive and there may be situations where these activities are within professional staff/student boundaries. Such situations where these activities may be within professional boundaries are when the staff member's child is friends with another student. In this circumstance the activity may be acceptable as long as the staff member is not alone with the student (the staff member's child or another person should be present) and the staff member's supervisor is aware of the staff member's activities.

- Being alone with an individual student out of the view of others, unless required in connection with providing educational services in accordance with your employment (e.g., health screening, counseling, therapy, nursing, personal care and other services required by individualized education plans, 504 plans or other medical condition action plans).
- Inviting or allowing individual students to visit the staff member's home.
- Visiting a student's home or meeting the student at another location outside of school for non-educational purposes.
- Transporting a student in a staff member's private vehicle without permission of the Principal and the parent. Before an above activity has occurred, staff members should communicate with the Principal and obtain approval. If any of the above activity occurs and is not approved, the staff member must report the occurrence to the Principal as soon as possible.
- Targeting a particular student or students for personal attention or friendship. Gossiping with or about other students or staff and confiding in students beyond the normal staff member-student relationship is prohibited.

- Asking a student to keep a secret, promise to keep a student's secret or coerce a student to confide their personal or family problems. If a student initiates a discussion of their personal or family problems, staff members are expected to be supportive and if need be, refer the student to the pastor, if appropriate.
- Engaging in sexual, racial or religious banter, jokes or innuendoes with students. Discriminatory and/or banter that marginalizes a student or groups of students is strictly prohibited.
- Showing inappropriate images, including pornography, violence or explicit language to students.
- Engaging in, discussing or planning future romantic or sexual relationships with students.
- Making sexual advances towards students or flirting with students.
- Engaging with a student's flirting or sexual overtures. Any incidents of a student flirting with a staff member or making sexual overtures towards a staff member must be reported.
- Providing or offering to provide alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or paraphernalia to students.
- Singling out any one student and providing the student with gift(s) or accepting expensive or numerous gifts from students. Nominal gifts to multiple students/classroom are permissible. Nominal gifts to teachers as a form of appreciation are acceptable.
- Addressing students with unique pet names or personalized terms of endearment that suggest a unique and overly familiar relationship. Staff members shall not allow students to address them by their first name alone, nickname, pet names or personalized terms of endearment that suggest an overly familiar relationship.
- Commenting on a student's physical appearance.
- Engaging in any type of inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment, discrimination, or retaliation under the St. John's Non-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, Harassment policies.
- Using corporal punishment or engaging in any disciplinary action with the intention of producing physical or emotional pain (such as humiliation, embarrassment, threats, or other punitive or demoralizing actions toward a student), this includes conduct towards the children of staff members enrolled in St. John's.

Reporting Possible or Actual Violations of These Standards

Students, parents/guardians and staff members shall notify the Principal if they believe a St. John's staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates these Standards. Prompt reporting protects all personnel.

St. John's staff shall immediately notify the Principal if they believe that they are receiving inappropriate attention from a student, or if they have been subject to sexual advances, comments or communications by a student.

The failure of a St. John's staff member to timely report conduct that violates these Standards can result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

St. John's staff members are mandatory reporters and shall abide by the Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect and Inappropriate Relations between Adults and Students and also have an independent obligation to notify the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) at 800-252-2873 (1-800-25-ABUSE) if they suspect that child abuse or neglect has occurred.

Acceptable Supportive/Encouraging Behavior

It is acceptable to show students that you care. St. John's staff members can promote affirming, inclusive and positive environments for students with your words and body language, such as actively listening, appropriately responding and relaying that you are concerned for students. It is acceptable to high five, fist bump, handshake, or say "give yourself a pat on the back." In order to console a student, it is permissible to offer tissue, offer them time to take a walk, or give the student a quick side hug.

Travel/Transportation

Staff members may transport a student with the written consent of both the Principal and parent/guardian of the student. Written consent from the parent/guardian must be given in advance of the trip. If the Principal gives consent to a staff member to transport a student in a private vehicle, the Principal must maintain a copy of the staff member's driver's license and insurance documentation. If a staff member transports a student with permission from the parent/guardian and the Principal, efforts should be made for an additional adult to be in the car such that the staff member is not alone with a student outside the view of others.

TAKING OR POSSESSING A PHOTO OR VIDEO OF A STUDENT

Taking and using photos/videos of students for educational purposes must be done with student and parent/guardian consent, abiding by student records laws, policies, and procedures.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING RELATED TO CHILD ABUSE AND EDUCATOR ETHICS

- Yearly Training Possibilities:
 - Understanding Domestic Violence
 - Effects of Domestic Violence on Children and Adolescents
 - Warning Signs of Domestic Violence in Children and Adolescents
 - Violence with Expectant/Parenting Youth
 - Teen Dating Violence
 - Child Abuse and Neglect -Identification and Mandated Reporting
 - Signs of Sexual Abuse
 - Signs of Emotional Maltreatment
 - "When Should I Call the Hotline" as a Mandated Reporter
- Yearly Review of Educator Code of Ethics
- Faith's Law Training
 - What is sexual misconduct?
 - Expectations for Professional Relationships with Students
- Title IX Training and Review

