

## **Principles of Professional Conduct**

- The State of Florida has established the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida which are found in State Board Rule 6A-10.081. As professionals, all employees must be aware of and adhere to these rules at all times. These rules are established by the State of Florida and govern the teaching certificates of instructional personnel.
- In addition, all employees are expected to adhere to School Board Policy 6.301, and Part III, Chapter 112, Florida Statutes regarding ethics.
- The Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida acts as the Code of Ethics for all employees of the Hernando County School Board. It requires that the educator values:
  - the worth and dignity of every person,
  - the pursuit of truth,
  - devotion to excellence,
  - acquisition of knowledge, and
  - the nurture of democratic citizenship.
- The educator's primary professional concern will always be for the student and the development of the student's potential.
- The educator strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct. Educational professionals have obligations to three (3) separate groups as part of the Code of Ethics:
  - the student,
  - the public and
  - the profession
- Click the indicated links to view/download State Board Rule 6A-10.081 The Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida and the Identifying and Reporting Professional Misconduct Brochure.

## **Interaction with Students**

- Know your school and district policies and state laws governing corporal punishment, sexual harassment, and discrimination.
- Maintain a professional relationship with students. Teachers and other adults are role models.
- Respect the students. Respect their differences. Know the students' rights.
- Keep the classroom door open when talking to students.
- Refer students to the appropriate resource person for counseling and/or discussions about personal matters.
- Do not transport a student in your vehicle
- Do not leave your students unsupervised. Have an alternate plan of action.
- Chaperone only school-sponsored functions. When chaperoning a field trip, put your responsibilities in writing.
- Keep hands and other parts of your body to yourself.
- Do NOT harass students. What you intend as humor may, in fact, be cultural bias or harassment.

- Do NOT flirt with students.
- Do NOT socialize with, or date, a student.
- Do NOT drink alcohol or abuse drugs in front of, or with, a student.
- Do NOT take students home with you.
- Do NOT make telephone calls or write notes of a personal nature to students.
- Do NOT discuss your personal life or personal matters with students.

### **Reputation in the Community**

- Maintain a professional reputation in the community.
- Know that any conduct, behavior or action that you engage in, outside the school and after school hours including weekends, that violates The Principles of Professional Conduct, may be investigated by the District and the Bureau of Educator Standards.
- Dress and act appropriately and professionally. You are a role model in the community as well as in the school.
- Refuse to accept gifts or favors which might influence professional judgment.
- Avoid using your professional position for personal gain or advantage.

### **Reputation with Parents, Co-Workers, District Employees**

- Treat parents with dignity, respect and courtesy at all times.
- Communicate with, and document your communications with parents.
- All co-workers and employees of the District are to be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy at all times.
- Keep your co-workers and supervisors informed.
- Know and follow school and district policies and state laws regarding discrimination and harassment.
- Use common sense and good judgment. Ask yourself how someone else could perceive your comments or actions. Ask yourself if your comments or actions could be taken out of context and/or misinterpreted.
- Avoid putting yourself in a position where you have to defend, explain, or justify your behavior or actions.
- Avoid putting yourself in a position where it's your word against another person's word.
- The following forms of discrimination and harassment are prohibited and may result in the termination of your employment and/or costly litigation for the District. They include, but are not limited to:
  - Race
  - Color
  - Sex
  - Religion
  - National Origin
  - Citizenship
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Sexual Orientation

## **Record Keeping and Accounting Procedures**

- Keep accurate and detailed records for all record keeping and accounting under your area of responsibility.
- Know **and follow** all school board, district and school rules, policies and procedures.
- Know **and follow** school and district policies and state laws regarding collecting money as well as purchasing materials and equipment. Work in pairs when collecting and accounting for money.
- Do NOT alter students' grades for inappropriate reasons.
- Do NOT alter financial documents, including but not limited to: purchase order, invoices and event revenue statements.
- Do NOT use school funds or event revenue for personal use or gain.
- Do NOT submit fraudulent information on any document in conjunction with professional qualifications or professional activities.

## **Self Reporting Arrests**

- Employees are required to self-report any and all arrests and convictions, regardless of the level of the charges, within 48 hours. This includes arrest citations – these will register as arrests in the state database.
- The employee is required to report the arrest and/or conviction to their site administrator.
- Failure to report arrests and/or convictions as required shall be grounds for termination of employment.

## **Sexual Harassment**

While it is not easy to define precisely what sexual harassment is, it certainly includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Offering employment or other benefits in exchange for sexual favors
- Making threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances
- Visual conduct: Leering, making sexual gestures, displaying of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons or posters
- Verbal conduct: Making or using derogatory comments, slurs or jokes
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations
- Physical conduct: touching, assaulting, impeding or blocking movements

## **Computers/Internet**

Know and follow all school board, district and school policies relating to personal use of district owned computers and software and bringing personal computers to school.