



Bridge to Independence

PRIVATE SCHOOL

Behavior Respect Integrity Diligence Grades Excellence

and

KidsZone Learning Preschool, Inc.

2023-2024

POLICY ON EMPLOYEE ETHICS STANDARDS

Training Requirement All instructional personnel and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct. Establish the duty to report alleged misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Establish the procedure to report alleged misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Includes an explanation of the liability protections provided under Sections 39.203 and 768.095.

The school expects all employees to avoid activities that create conflicts of interest with their responsibilities to Bridge to Independence, Inc/KidsZone. Each employee has an obligation to refrain from activities which conflict or interfere with the school's operations or with others with whom the school does business. Bridge to Independence/ Kidszone adopt and communicates policies and procedures setting forth standards of Ethical Conduct for Instructional Personnel and Administrators defined by **Sections 1002.01.**

Employment contracts between schools and employees will be respected by both parties, and no school shall initiate an offer of employment to an employee of another AISF member school without that school's approval. School and its employees will neither solicit the school community nor allow school directories or mailing lists to be used by others for purposes unrelated to the educational program. School's enrollment practices shall be consistent with written policies and procedures and shall not be subject to bargaining and other extraneous considerations.

Qualified students shall be admitted without regard to race, color, creed, ethnic background, native origin, sexual orientation, social and family background or any other specific handicaps.

BACKGROUND

Prior to employment, the private school checks each candidate's previous employer and document the findings. Also screen each candidate for an instructional or administrative position by using the **Department of Education's screening tool** and **Florida Department of Law Enforcement/ VECHS entity**. A candidate is **disqualifying** from employment personnel with direct student contact if convicted of a disqualifying offense defined in **Section 16 SB 1712** amends **1002.421 F. S.**

Bridge to Independence/Kidszone are responsible for reviewing and terminating employees or contracted personnel that do not comply with **Section 435.04**.

Bridge to Independence /KidsZone are required for retention of employees' fingerprints with FDLE annual will remain in compliance with scholarship participation requirements.

Every five years following employment, personnel must again meet the screening standards established in statute. All fingerprints will be forward to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for national processing and must pay the associated fee.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING MISCONDUCT

Bridge to Independence/ KidsZone employees and agents have a mandatory duty to report misconduct at the school. The school will post a notice in the front office at the school site and policies and procedures for reporting misconduct. All employees must go through the training on Ethics in Education Act.

Florida Statutes s.1006.061 states all employees and agents of the district school board, charter school and private schools that accept scholarship students, have an obligation to report misconduct by an instructional personnel member or school administrator.

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 Executive Director (Nicole Phillips Hollis) of Bridge to Independence, Inc. Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to the Board of Directors of Bridge to Independence, Inc/KidsZone.

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 Bridge to Independence/KidsZone school office and on our Web site at www.btischool.com.

Who Should You Report?

Those who are unprofessional and detrimental to children in school:

- Classroom Teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Substitute Teachers, Van drivers, Staff & Volunteers
- Librarians, Guidance Counselors & Social Workers
- Career Specialist & School Psychologist
- Principals, Assistant Principals, Administrators & School Owners

See Attachment for sample behaviors indicative of misconduct that should be reported.

How Do You Report Misconduct?

- Report allegations of misconduct by school staff or volunteers to your school administrator or designated contact as outlined by your school's procedures on reporting misconduct.
- Report allegations or suspicion of misconduct by your school administrator to your oversight organization such as a board of directors.

Failure To Report Misconduct:

- Written Reprimand
- Suspension with or without pay
- Termination of Employment
- Discipline/Sanctions on an Educator's Certificate if Applicable

If someone tells you about or you witness Misconduct, be a **LEADER**:

- Listen
- Evaluate
- Act Immediately
- Document
- Encourage
- Report

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POLICY/PROCEDURE ON REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Bridge to Independence / KidsZone employees, 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. Any act of physical or sexual abuse is not tolerated.

No employee of Bridge to Independence, Inc/KidsZone serving children may be subjected reprisal or discharge because of his or her actions in reporting abuse, abandonment, or neglect in accordance with **Section 39.203**.

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 see 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.

Bridge to Independence/KidsZone will post a notice that **ALL** employees and Agents of the school have a duty to report **ALL** actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

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. **Look** for the signs of Child Abuse (See Attachments):
The hotline's Toll –Free Number **1-800-96-ABUSE** or **report online at:**
<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

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EXPLANATION of EMPLOYEE LIABILITY PROTECTIONS

Under Sections 768.095 and 39.203 , Florida Statutes employer immunity from liability; disclosure of information regarding former or current employees.

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).

Bridge to Independence, Inc./KidsZone will disclose information about a former or current employee to a prospective employer of the former or current employee 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 **Chapter 760**.

The contact person is Ms. Nicole Phillips Hollis, Chief Executive Director/ Principal at 407-487-1502 or email: nicolephollis@gmail.com.

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