

Metropolitan Preparatory & Laureate Day School

Employee Code of Professional Conduct Policy

This Employee Code of Professional Conduct Policy (“Professional Conduct Policy”) is in compliance with and pursuant to Section 22-85.5 of the Illinois School Code (also known as “Faith’s Law”) [105 ILCS 5/22-85.5], as applicable for Illinois nonpublic therapeutic day schools. The success of students in school relies on safe learning environments and healthy relationships with school personnel. It is important for staff to maintain a professional relationship with students at all times and to define staff-student boundaries to protect students from sexual misconduct by staff and staff from the appearance of impropriety.

All employees of Metropolitan Preparatory and Laureate Day School are expected to comply with this Professional Conduct Policy and the Illinois State Board of Education’s Code of Ethics, which is hereby incorporated into this policy as set forth below, and to maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students, parents, staff members, and others.

Any employee who sexually harasses a student, willfully or negligently fails to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act* (“ANCRA”) (325 ILCS 5/1 et seq.), engages in grooming as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25, engages in grooming behaviors, violates boundaries for appropriate school employee-student conduct, engages in sexual misconduct as defined in 105 ILCS 5/22-85.5, and set out below, or otherwise violates an employee conduct standard, including those standards of the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

As nonpublic therapeutic day schools, Metropolitan Preparatory and Laureate Day School serve a unique population of students with disabilities, including emotional disabilities, and it is the expectation of Metropolitan Preparatory and Laureate Day School that its staff recognize and are sensitive to the unique needs of the students, as well as their ages and developmental levels. Therefore, employees and agents must maintain a professional relationship with students and uphold appropriate boundaries at all times by complying with the following guidelines and standards at a minimum:

- 1) Comply with the following Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators, adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education:
 - **Principle 1: Responsibility to Students.** The Illinois 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. Illinois 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, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language or socioeconomic 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.
- **Principle 2: Responsibility to Self.** The Illinois Educator is committed to establishing high professional standards for their practice and striving to meet these standards through their performance. Illinois 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.
- **Principle 3: Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession.** The Illinois Educator is committed to collaborating with school and district colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning. Illinois 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.
- **Principle 4: Responsibility to Parents, Families and Communities.** The Illinois Educator will collaborate, build trust, and respect confidentiality with parents, families, and communities to create effective instruction and learning environments for each student. Illinois 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.
 - **Principle 5: Responsibility to the Illinois State Board of Education.** Illinois educators are committed to compliance with the School Code [105 ILCS 5] and its implementing regulations, and to State and federal laws and regulations relevant to their profession. Illinois educators:
 - Provide accurate communication to the Illinois State Board of Education concerning all educator licensure matters;
 - Maintain appropriate educator licensure for employment; and
 - Comply with State and federal laws and regulations.
- 2) Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in grooming behaviors and sexual misconduct, which under this policy, and pursuant to Section 22-85.5 of the *Illinois School Code*, is defined as 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 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:
- A sexual or romantic invitation.
 - Dating or soliciting a date.
 - Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialogue.
 - Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student.
 - Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.
 - A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student.
- 3) All employees of Metropolitan Preparatory and Laureate Day Schools are expected to maintain a professional relationship with students and uphold appropriate staff-student boundaries, recognizing the age and developmental level of students, and uphold the following guidelines:
- Sexual misconduct and grooming behaviors are strictly prohibited and staff shall not engage in any such behaviors.
 - Employees are not permitted to transport students in the employee's privately owned vehicles. All transportation of students to and from the school is pursuant to the student's transportation plan (or IEP) and any changes need to be approved by the Principal and will be made in consultation with the Parent/Guardian.
 - Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in communication with students through personal platforms, *i.e.*, personal e-mail addresses, social media, text message, web applications. Employees are prohibited in engaging in communication in any form on any subject matter that would be deemed unprofessional and inappropriate between an employee and student.

- Employees are not permitted to take or possess a photo or video of a student on their private devices.
 - Employees are not permitted to meet with a student or contact a student outside the employee's professional role. Employees are expected to avoid crossing a line that results in an actual or perceived inappropriate relationship
- 4) Employees are mandated reporters and required to comply with all reporting requirements of the *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act* (325 ILCS 5/). Employees are also required to report any sexual harassment or sexual abuse under this policy to the Principal.
 - 5) Employees are required to complete training related to educator ethics, child abuse and mandated reporting, grooming behaviors, and boundary violations consistent with Section 22-85.5 of the *Illinois School Code*.

A violation of this Professional Conduct Policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment. Failure to report a violation of this Professional Conduct Policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

