

# BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE, INC.

2024-2025

## 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.

### POLICY

The school expects all employees to avoid activities that create conflicts of interest with their responsibilities to Bridge to Independence, Inc. 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 adopts 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 NIPSA 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 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 **disqualify** 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 is responsible for reviewing and terminating employees or contracted personnel that do not comply with **Section 435.04**.

Bridge to Independence is 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 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, Bridge to Independence, Inc.

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 school office and on our **Web site at [www.btischool.com](http://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

# **BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE, INC.**

## **POLICY/PROCEDURE ON REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

Bridge to Independence 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.

No employee of Bridge to Independence, Inc 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**.

Bridge to Independence 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**

# **BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE, INC.**

## **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.**

**Bridge to Independence, Inc.** will disclose 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 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.