# Temple Christian School

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## Principles of Professional Conduct of the Profession of Education at Temple Christian School

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**PURPOSE:**

To comply with the requirement established by the Florida Ethics in Education Act, Florida Statute §1002.421, through the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of a policy that regulates and creates ethical standards in employment and notifies all staff of their obligations to report child abuse.

**APPLICABLE LAW:**

Florida Statute §220.187
Florida Statute §1002.41
Florida Statute §1006.061
Florida Statute §768.095
Florida Statute §1012.315
Florida Statute §1002.39
Florida Statute §1012.01
Florida Statute §39.203
Florida Statute §1001.10(5)
Florida Statute §943.0542

**DEFINITIONS:**

A. "Staff with direct student contact" means any employee, volunteer, or contracted personnel who has unsupervised access to a scholarship student for whom the private school is responsible.
B. "Teachers" means staff members assigned the professional activity of instructing students in courses in classroom situations, including basic instruction, exceptional student education, career education, and adult education, including substitute teachers.
C. "School administrator" includes:
    1. School principals or school directors who are staff members performing the assigned activities as the administrative head of a school and to whom have been delegated responsibility for the coordination and administrative direction of the instructional and non-instructional activities of the school.
    2. Assistant principals or other school administrators who are staff members assisting the administrative head of the school.
D. For the purpose of these regulations, Temple Christian School shall also be recognized as TCS.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE:**

As a religious entity, Temple Christian School is legally permitted to make enrollment and employment decisions based upon religious criteria, including doctrinal and lifestyle issues. It is the policy of Temple Christian School to employ persons who subscribe without reservation to Temple Christian School's Statement of Faith and Principles of Professional Conduct and who are living out these doctrines and standards in all areas of their lives, both at and away from Temple Christian School functions. Temple Christian School does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, sex (as determined at birth and not subject to change), national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

**EMPLOYMENT SCREENING:**

All teachers, whether paid or volunteer, will hold the appropriate bachelor's degree for their division of the school, have at least three (3) years of teaching experience in public or private schools, OR have special skills, knowledge, or expertise that qualifies them to provide instruction in subjects taught.

All staff members, whether paid or volunteer, who have direct student contact will undergo a state and national background screening, pursuant to Florida Statute §943.0542, by electronically filing with the Department of Law Enforcement a complete set of fingerprints taken by an authorized law enforcement agency or an employee of Temple Christian School, a school district, or a private company who is trained to take fingerprints and deny employment to or terminate an employee if he or she fails to meet the screening standards under Florida Statute §435.04 Results of the screening shall become property of Temple Christian School.

No person having direct student contact will begin working with the school, in any capacity, without first submitting to a state and national background screening. Upon notification that a staff member or potential staff member has failed the background screening, the staff member or potential staff member will be dismissed or denied employment.

All staff members with direct student contact will undergo background screening. Upon notification that a staff member has failed the background screening, the staff member will be immediately dismissed.

All potential staff members who will have direct student contact will provide past employer references as a part of their pre-employment screening process. No staff members will begin service to the ministry until the ministry has contacted or has reasonably attempted to contact all past employer references. All contacts will be documented and become the property of Temple Christian School.

All findings will be documented and will become the property of Temple Christian School.

**DISQUALIFYING CRIMES:**

Staff members that have direct contact with students will be disqualified from employment or volunteer service if an employment screening document, interview or background check reveals a conviction for any of the following offenses. If an employment screening document, interview or background check reveals an arrest, investigation, or accusation, potential employees must be prepared to discuss these issues prior to hiring.

A. Any felony offense prohibited under any of the following Florida Statutes:
   1. Section 393.135, relating to sexual misconduct with certain developmentally disabled clients and report of such sexual misconduct;
   2. Section 394.4593, relating to sexual misconduct with certain mental health patients and reporting of such sexual misconduct;
   3. Section 415.111, relating to adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation of aged persons or disabled adults;
   4. Section 782.04; relating to murder;
   5. Section 782.07, relating to manslaughter, aggravated manslaughter of an elderly person or disabled adult, aggravated manslaughter of a child, or aggravated manslaughter of an officer, a firefighter, an emergency medical technician, or a paramedic;
   6. Section 784.021, relating to aggravated assault;
   7. Section 784.045, relating to aggravated battery;
   8. Section 784.075, relating to battery on a detention or commitment facility staff member or a juvenile probation officer;
   9. Section 787.01, relating to kidnapping;
   10. Section 787.02, relating to false imprisonment;
   11. Section 787.025, relating to luring or enticing a child;
   12. Section 787.04(2), related to leading, taking, enticing, or removing a minor beyond the state limits, or concealing the location of a minor, with criminal intent pending custody proceedings;
   13. Section 787.04(3), relating to leading, taking, enticing, or removing a minor beyond the state limits, or concealing the location of a minor, with criminal intent pending dependency proceedings or proceedings concerning alleged abuse or neglect of a minor;
   14. Section 790.115(1), relating to exhibiting firearms or weapons at a school-sponsored event, on school property, or within 1,000 feet of a school;
   15. Section 790.115 (2)(b), relating to possessing an electric weapon or device, destructive device, or other weapon at a school-sponsored event or on school property;
   16. Section 794.011, relating to sexual battery;
   17. Former s. 794.041, relating to sexual activity with, or solicitation of a child by a person in familial or custodial authority. Section 794.05, relating to unlawful sexual activity with certain minors;
   18. Section 794.08, relating to female genital mutilation;
   19. Chapter 796, relating to prostitution;
   20. Chapter 800, relating to lewdness and indecent exposure;
   21. Section 806.01, relating to arson;
   22. Section 810.14, relating to voyeurism;
   23. Section 810.145, relating to video voyeurism;
   24. Section 812.014(6), relating to coordinating the commission of theft in excess of $3,000.00;
   25. Section 812.0145, relating to theft from persons sixty-five (65) years of age or older;
   26. Section 812.13, relating to robbery;
   27. Section 812.131, relating to robbery by sudden snatching;
   28. Section 812.133, relating to carjacking;
   29. Section 812.135, relating to home-invasion robbery;
   30. Section 817.563, relating to fraudulent sale of controlled substances;

31. Section 825.102, relating to abuse, aggravated abuse, or neglect of an elderly person or disabled adult;
32. Section 825.103, relating to exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult;
33. Section 825.1025, relating to lewd or lascivious offenses committed upon or in the presence of an elderly person or disabled person;
34. Section 826.104; relating to incest;
35. Section 827.03, relating to child abuse, aggravated child abuse, or neglect of a child;
36. Section 827.04, relating to contributing to the delinquency or dependency of a child;
37. Section 827.071, relating to sexual performance by a child;
38. Section 843.01, relating to resisting arrest with violence;
39. Chapter 847, relating to obscenity;
40. Section 874.05, relating to causing encouraging, soliciting, or recruiting another to join a criminal street gang;
41. Chapter 893, relating to drug abuse prevention and control, if the offense was a felony of the second degree or greater severity;
42. Section 916.1075, relating to sexual misconduct with certain forensic clients and reporting of such sexual misconduct;
43. Section 944.47, relating to introduction, removal, or possession of contraband at a correctional facility;
44. Section 985.701, relating to sexual misconduct in juvenile justice programs; and/or
45. Section 985.711, relating to introduction, removal or possession of contraband at a juvenile detention facility or commitment program;

B. Any misdemeanor offense prohibited under any of the following statutes:
   1. Section 784.03, relating to battery, if the victim of the offense was a minor;
   2. Section 787.025; relating to luring or enticing a child;
   3. Any criminal act committed in another state or under federal law which, if committed in this state, constitutes an offense prohibited under any statute listed in subsection (1) or subsection (2); and or
   4. Any delinquent act committed in this state or any delinquent or criminal act committed in another state or under federal law which, if committed in this state, qualifies an individual for inclusion on the Registered Juvenile Sex Offender List under s. 943.0435(1)(a)1.d.

Temple Christian School understands that scholarship funding shall be suspended if Temple Christian School knowingly fails to comply with this subsection, and the Department of Education shall prohibit Temple Christian School from enrolling new scholarship students, for one (1) fiscal year and until the school complies.

**CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR STAFF MEMBERS:**

Temple Christian School values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of spiritual growth. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach in a truly Christian Environment. Temple Christian School's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential, both from an educational perspective and a spiritual perspective. Temple Christian School will therefore strive for professional and spiritual growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity while maintaining a proper Christian testimony. Aware

of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of other members of the community, Temple Christian School therefore strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

**PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL AND SPIRITUAL CONDUCT FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF MEMBERS:**

The following disciplinary rules shall constitute Temple Christian School's ethical standards for all staff members. Violation of any of these standards shall subject the individual to discipline and/or dismissal and suspension and/or revocation of the individual educator's certificate, or the other penalties as provided by law.

A. Obligation to the student requires that the individual:
   1. Shall manifest by precept and example the highest Christian virtue and personal decorum, serving as a Christian Role Model both at and away from Temple Christian School, and as an example to all in judgment, dignity, respect and Christian living;
   2. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety;
   3. Shall not engage in personal relationships with students outside of the classroom that are inappropriate, familiar or of an immature manner;
   4. Shall not invite student to overnight outings, whether in teacher's home or otherwise;
   5. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning;
   6. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement;
   7. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights;
   8. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, handicapping condition, marital status, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination;
   9. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage; and
   10. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law;
   11. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view;
   12. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.

B. Obligation to the public requires that the individual:
   1. Shall subscribe without reservation to the Articles of Faith and the Standards of Conduct of Temple Christian School and agree to abide by these doctrines and standards in all aspects of my life, both at and away from ministry functions;
   2. Shall understand that the bona fide occupational qualification of being a Christian Role Model includes, but is not limited to, abstaining from all acts of homosexuality, fornication, adultery, transvestitism and deviant gender identity;
   3. Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage;
   4. Shall accept no gratuity, gift or favor that might influence professional judgment;
   5. Shall offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages;

6. Shall make reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated;
7. Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.

C. Obligation to the profession of education requires that the individual:
1. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings;
2. Shall remain loyal to the school leadership and Temple Christian School's programs in word and in action;
3. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct contrary to Temple Christian School's Statement of Faith, which unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly processes of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and, further, shall make reasonable effort to assure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination;
4. Shall abstain from the abuse of alcohol and tobacco products;
5. Shall not engage in any intimate sexual activity outside of marriage
6. , shall not engage in viewing pornography, and shall not make any attempt to alter gender by surgery or appearance;
7. Shall understand that homosexual conduct defined as acts or identifying statements, is incompatible with employment at Temple Christian School and is a basis for dismissal;
8. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague;
9. Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgments of colleagues;
10. Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications;
11. Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities;
12. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position;
13. Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment;
14. Shall not assist entry into or continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with these Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida and other applicable Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules;
15. Shall self-report within forty-eight (48) hours to the school administrator any arrests/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt, nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, shall self-report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or Nolo Contendre for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within forty-eight (48) hours after the final judgment. When handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, school shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of Sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), Florida Statutes;
16. Shall understand and agree to perform all duties and responsibilities entrusted to me by the Temple Christian School leadership to their complete and full satisfaction;

17. Shall report to appropriate authorities any known allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 1012.795(1), Florida Statutes;
18. Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported any allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 1012.795(1), Florida Statutes;
19. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization;
20. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities;
21. Shall provide upon the request of the certificated individual, a written statement of specific reason for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment;
22. Shall comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission;
23. Shall, as the supervising administrator, cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS:**

Temple Christian School, or any of its employees, may not enter into a confidentiality agreement regarding terminated or dismissed staff members, or staff members who resign in lieu of termination, based in whole or in part on misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student, and may not provide the staff member with employment references or discuss the personnel's or administrators' performance with prospective employers in another educational setting, without disclosing the staff member's misconduct. Any part of an agreement or contract that has the purpose or effect of concealing misconduct by staff members which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student is void, is contrary to public policy, and may not be enforced.

**MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Temple Christian School seeks to express God's love of children and provide for their personal wholeness. This caring community seeks to prevent child abuse of any form to our children and youth and to minister to victims of abuse and their families. The Bible is foundational to our understanding upon which all policies, procedures, and ministries must stand.

*And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.* (Mark 10:13 – 16)

*And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the*

*sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!* (Matthew 18:5 – 7)

Our goal in response to these Biblical mandates is to maintain a safe, secure, and loving place where children may grow: a place where caregivers, teachers, and leaders (both paid and volunteer) minister appropriately to their needs.

**Temple Christian School desires to be a safe place for all children and adults who attend any activity.** Individuals they know and trust sometimes victimize children. The ministry is not immune to such abuse, either by its members or by those in leadership positions. Incidents of child abuse or neglect cut across racial, social, economic and religious boundaries. Although no organization or individual can assure complete protection, this policy reflects Temple Christian School's commitment to help protect children from harm.

Temple Christian School will not tolerate child abuse or neglect. Staff cooperation in this commitment not only reflects a concern about children's safety in this society, but also a willingness to take steps toward halting child abuse and its detrimental effects.

For the safety and protection of our children and workers, all people who participate in Temple Christian School sponsored activities with children are required to comply with the guidelines provided in this policy.

If Temple Christian School receives an allegation of child abuse, it will respond with the utmost concern to the victim, parent, or other party making such an allegation. The accused will be treated with dignity and support. Without clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, Temple Christian School's personnel will assume that such complaints are made in good faith. Persons making such complaints should have no doubt that Temple Christian School takes them seriously and will take appropriate action.

When it becomes necessary to report suspected child abuse or neglect, the protection of children must be the most important concern. It is the legal responsibility of any person with responsibility for the care of children to report all cases of child abuse they observe, and further, to report visible signs of alleged abuse. Failure to report could lead to liability, both civilly and criminally, on the part of Temple Christian School, the observer or both. Temple Christian School has determined that it is the responsibility of the program staff to report all cases of suspected child abuse to the proper legal authorities.

**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 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 Administrator of Temple Christian School.

Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to the Senior Pastor of Temple Baptist Church.

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 outlined below.

**Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect**

All employees and agents have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Contact information is provided below.

**What is reasonable suspicion?** Reasonable suspicion means that there is credible evidence or a discrepant or inconsistent history in explaining a child's suspected abuse. A report based on reasonable suspicion does not require proof that abuse or neglect has actually occurred or that the reporter witnessed the incident in question. Reporting is not a determination that child abuse or neglect has actually occurred; rather, it is a request for an assessment of the condition of the child.

**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 seem 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 undergarments, 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.

Because we believe children are our most important concern, Temple Christian School has adopted the following guidelines for reporting:

A. Treat each allegation of child abuse seriously.
B. Attempt to assure the safety and protection of persons who have been harmed.

C. Pray for Temple Christian School and all persons affected by the allegation.
D. Immediately begin documenting all procedures observed in handling the allegation.
E. Immediately notify the school administrator or principal. The school administrator or principal will, along with the reporting staff member, immediately report allegations to the Department of Children and Family Services.
F. Immediately notify the authorities and take guidance from law enforcement on next steps.
G. As appropriate, the school administrator shall immediately notify Temple Christian School's insurance carrier of the possibility of a claim. If the abuse allegation does not implicate a Temple Christian School staff member or Temple Christian School volunteer, this step may be omitted.
H. If the accused has assigned duties within Temple Christian School, that person will be immediately relieved of his duties until the investigation is concluded.
I. Temple Christian School authorities should extend whatever care and resources necessary. In providing care to the principals (alleged victim and the accused) and their families, the pastor, ministry leader, and/or school authorities should under no circumstances be drawn into a discussion of the truth or falsity of the allegation which could contaminate an official investigation. Do not assign blame or take any steps that involve establishing or negating the allegation.
J. It is appropriate to show care and comfort for the alleged victim. This should be the pastoral objective from the moment the allegation is received or otherwise made known.
K. Observe confidentiality for both the alleged victim and the accused until advised to the contrary by the school administrator.
L. Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child or student is secured.
M. Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously and reach out to the alleged victim and his or her family.
N. Treat the accused with dignity and support.
O. If the media or other parties contact a ministry official or school authorities about a pending allegation of child abuse, they should be referred to the principal or school administrator. Only the ministry leader, school authorities, or their designees should make comments about the allegations, using a prepared public statement to answer the press and to convey news to the congregation, staff members and school personnel. The prepared statement shall be made only after consultation with Temple Christian School's attorney and will include the steps that Temple Christian School has taken to protect children, such as the development and implementation of this manual, and the care and concern Temple Christian School has for all parties involved. The privacy and confidentiality of all involved shall continue to be of primary concern.

## LIABILITY PROTECTIONS

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 of 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)

An employer who discloses 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 immune from civil liability for such disclosure or its consequences unless it 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 F.S. Chapter 760. (F.S. 768.095)

**TRAINING REQUIREMENT**

Ethical Standard of Conduct Training is a requirement at Temple Christian School. This training has been incorporated into our Annual Orientation Session, which is held at the beginning of each school year. Additional training opportunities will be provided on an as-needed basis.

**Important Contacts and Their Phone Numbers**

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| National Child Abuse Hotline | 1-800-4-A-CHILD |
| Florida Child Abuse Hotline | (800) 96-ABUSE (800-962-2873) |
| Department of Children and Services web site | http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/ |