



Standards of Ethical Conduct

(Adapted from the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida)

1. Educational Philosophy and Core Values

Our Montessori school values the dignity and potential of every child. We believe in nurturing the whole child through respect, independence, curiosity, and a love of learning. Our school supports the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, the acquisition of knowledge, and the development of responsible, compassionate citizens.

Central to the Montessori philosophy are:

- Respect for each child as an individual
- Freedom within limits
- A prepared environment that encourages exploration and independence
- Equal opportunity and inclusion for all students

2. Commitment to the Child

Our primary concern is the child and the development of each student's full potential—academically, socially, emotionally, and morally.

All employees of our Montessori school will:

- Demonstrate professionalism and integrity
- Continue professional growth
- Use sound professional judgment in supporting the development of each child

3. Responsibilities Toward Students

Concern for the student requires that instructional personnel and staff:

- a. Make reasonable efforts to protect students from conditions harmful to learning or to their mental, emotional, or physical health and safety.
- b. Respect the Montessori principle of independence by allowing children to engage in purposeful learning activities appropriate to their developmental level.
- c. Encourage exploration and respect diverse perspectives within the learning environment.
- d. Present accurate and developmentally appropriate learning materials consistent with Montessori educational practices.



- e. Maintain a respectful classroom atmosphere and avoid actions that may embarrass, humiliate, or discourage a student.
- f. Respect and uphold each student's legal and civil rights.
- g. Not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or social and family background.
- h. Not exploit the professional relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
- i. Maintain confidentiality regarding personally identifiable information about students unless disclosure is required for professional purposes or by law.

4. Professional Conduct with Colleagues and Community

Employees of our Montessori school recognize the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents, and the community.

Employees therefore shall:

- Maintain honesty and integrity in all professional relationships.
- Not deny colleagues professional opportunities or advantages based on discrimination.
- Respect colleagues' civil and political rights.
- Avoid harassment, discrimination, or behavior that creates a hostile, intimidating, or abusive work environment.
- Refrain from making false or malicious statements about colleagues.

5. Training Requirement

All instructional personnel, support staff, and administrators must complete training on these Standards of Ethical Conduct as a condition of employment.

Training will include:

- Ethical responsibilities
- Student protection and safety
- Reporting requirements
- Professional conduct expectations



6. Reporting Misconduct by Instructional Personnel and Administrators

All employees have a duty to report misconduct by instructional personnel, educational support employees, or administrators that may affect the health, safety, or welfare of a student.

Examples of misconduct include:

- Obscene or inappropriate language
- Drug or alcohol use
- Disparaging comments
- Prejudice or discrimination
- Sexual misconduct or inappropriate behavior
- Cheating or testing violations
- Physical aggression
- Accepting or offering inappropriate favors

Reports of misconduct involving employees should be made to:

School Director or Head of School

Reports of misconduct involving administrators should be made to:

School Owner or Governing Board

Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida-certified educators will be reported to the **Office of Professional Practices Services of the Florida Department of Education.**

School policies regarding misconduct reporting are posted:

- In the staff handbook
- In the administrative office
- On the school website

7. Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment, or Neglect

All employees and agents have a legal duty to report any suspected or known cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

Reports must be made immediately by calling:

Florida Abuse Hotline: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)

or reporting online at: <https://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>



Signs of Physical Abuse

A child may show:

- Unexplained bruises, burns, or injuries
- Broken bones
- Fear of going home
- Withdrawal or aggression
- Wearing clothing to hide injuries

Signs of Sexual Abuse

A child may show:

- Torn or stained underwear
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Knowledge of sexual behavior inappropriate for age
- Sudden emotional changes
- Fear of a particular person

Signs of Neglect

- A child may show:
- Poor hygiene
- Lack of supervision
- Untreated medical needs
- Constant hunger or fatigue
- Excessive need for attention

Patterns of Abuse

Serious abuse often involves patterns of physical or behavioral indicators. Any suspected pattern must be reported immediately.

8. Liability Protection

Any person who reports suspected abuse, abandonment, or neglect in good faith is protected from civil or criminal liability under **Florida Statute 39.203**.

Employers who disclose information about a current or former employee to a prospective employer are immune from civil liability unless the information disclosed is knowingly false or violates the employee's civil rights under **Florida Statute 768.095**.