

East Hill Academy, Inc.

STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

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

1. Our school values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all.

2. Our primary concern is the student and the development of the student's potential. Employees will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.

3. Concern for the student requires that our instructional personnel:

- a. 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.
- b. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
- c. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
- d. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
- e. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- f. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
- g. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
- h. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
- i. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

4. Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the community, employees of our school must display the highest degree of ethical conduct. This commitment requires that our employees:

- a. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
- b. 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.
- c. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
- d. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct 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.
- e. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

Training Requirements

All instructional personnel, educational support employees and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct.

Reporting Misconduct by Instructional Personnel and Administrators

All employees, educational support employees, and administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel, educational support employees 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 by employees should be made to Barbara Barber, Owner/Founder (bbarber@easthillacademy.com) or Breanna Gifford, Administrator (bgifford@easthillacademy.com) – Telephone Number: 850-437-5560. Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to Kelly Krostag, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Services, Escambia County School District, 850-439-2220.

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 on the bulletin board in the school office of each campus and on our website at www.easthillacademy.org

Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect

East Hill Academy has a “zero tolerance” standard for any abuse, Abandonment or Neglect of its students.

All instructional personnel, educational support employees, volunteers and administrators are required as a condition of employment to agreeing to a background examination and to complete training on the identification and reporting of actual or suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

All employees, volunteers and agents have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to (1) Barbara Barber, Administrator, or Breanna Gifford, Assistant Administrator, (2) to Call 1-800-96-ABUSE (Florida Department of Children and Families), (3) report online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/> or (4) any other appropriate governmental agency.

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 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 Grooming Behavior

Grooming behavior means actions deliberately undertaken by an offender with the aim of befriending a child in order to lower the child’s sexual inhibitions or establish an intimate friendship in preparation for a sexual act with the child. Grooming behavior which includes hugging, preferential treatment, favoritism, touching, tickling, gifts, one-to-one time, use of personal email or social media, contact outside of school hours. All employees are prohibited from any such grooming behavior.

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.

Failure to Report Misconduct may result in possible penalties which may include Written Reprimand, Suspension with or without pay, Termination of Employment and Discipline/Sanctions on an educator's certificate.

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 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)

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).

September 2023 Addendum to Principles of Professional Conduct:

All school personnel must comply with the above referenced Florida Statute which states that females and males should be provided restrooms for their exclusive use, respective to their sex, in order to maintain public safety, decency, decorum, and privacy. Therefore, the following disciplinary procedures have been established for any personnel who willfully enters, for a purpose other than (a) To accompany a person of the opposite sex for the purpose of assisting or chaperoning a child under the age of 12, or a person with a disability or a developmental disability; (b) for law enforcement or governmental regulatory purposes; (c) for the purpose of rendering emergency medical assistance or to intervene in any other emergency situation where the health or safety of another person is at risk; (d) for custodial, maintenance, or inspection purposes, provided that the restroom is not in use; or (e) if the appropriate designated restroom is out of order or under repair and the restroom for the opposite sex contains no person of the opposite sex.

Consequences: Verbal Reprimand. Employee Counseling Record for repeat offenses.