



CODE of ETHICAL CONDUCT for EMPLOYEES

Trinity Christian Academy 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.

Trinity Christian Academy'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. Trinity Christian Academy 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, Trinity Christian Academy therefore strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

To comply with the requirements 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 Laws include Florida Statutes §220.187, §39.203, §1002.39, §768.095, §1002.41, §1001.10(5), §1012.01, §1012.315, §1012.315, §943.0542 and Statute 39.203

- Immunity from liability in cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.
- Any person, 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.
- Except as provided in this chapter, nothing contained in this section shall be deemed to grant immunity, civil or criminal, to any person suspected of having abused, abandoned, or neglected a child, or committed any illegal act upon or against a child.
- No resident or employee of a facility serving children may be subjected to reprisal or discharge because of his or her actions in reporting abuse, abandonment, or neglect pursuant to the requirements of this section.
- Any person making a report under this section shall have a civil cause of action for appropriate compensatory and punitive damages against any person who causes detrimental changes in the employment status of such reporting party by reason of his or her making such report. Any detrimental change made in the residency or employment status of such person, including, but not limited to, discharge, termination, demotion, transfer, or reduction in pay or benefits or work privileges, or negative evaluations within a prescribed period shall establish a rebuttable presumption that such action was retaliatory. Statute 768.095

Employer immunity from liability; disclosure of information regarding former or current employee. 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 chapter 760.

Definitions

- “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.
- “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.
- “School administrator” includes: Head of School or employees who are performing the assigned activities of an administrator and who have been delegated responsibility for the coordination and administrative direction of instructional and/or non-instructional activities of the school.

Concern for the student requires that our instructional personnel:

- 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.
- Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
- Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student’s legal rights.
- Shall not harass or discriminate against any student based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
- Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
- Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained during professional service unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
- 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:

- Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
- Shall not be based on 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.
- 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 everyone is protected from such harassment or discrimination.
- Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

Training Requirement - All instructional personnel 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 and administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affect 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 Head of School, sanelli.joseph@tcamail.org.

Reports of misconduct committed by the Head of School should be made to the Lead Pastor, Matt Baker, baker.matt@tcimail.org or the President of the School Board.

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. Call 1-800-96-ABUSE or report online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

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 the administrative hallway, break room in the JLC and Pavilion, in Preschool Building C and www.tca-warriors.org.

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 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.

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)