

VISIONS PREPARATORY ACADEMY

Ethics in Education Policies & Procedures Handbook

(Adopted in Accordance with Florida Statutes §§1006.061, 1002.421, and the Ethics in Education Act)

1. Introduction & Purpose

Policy:

- All instructional personnel, administrators, staff, and volunteers must adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct.
- The purpose of this handbook is to protect students, prevent misconduct, and maintain accountability.
- This policy is required under the Florida Ethics in Education Act.

Summary:

This handbook establishes clear expectations for how employees and volunteers must act when working with students. These rules are not optional—they are required by state law. By following them, we ensure the safety and trust of the students, families, and community we serve.

2. Scope of the Policy

Policy:

- Applies to all instructional personnel (teachers, aides, tutors, academic staff).
- Applies to all administrators (head of school, directors, deans).
- Applies to all staff, contractors, and volunteers with student contact.

Summary:

These policies apply to everyone who interacts with students on behalf of Visions Preparatory Academy. Whether you are a teacher, coach, office worker, or volunteer, you are held to the same ethical standards.

3. Core Standards of Ethical Conduct

Policy:

Instructional personnel and administrators must:

- Act in the best interest of students.
- Maintain honesty, transparency, and fairness.
- Protect confidentiality of student records.
- Avoid conflicts of interest.
- Uphold professional boundaries at all times.
- Treat students, families, and colleagues with dignity and respect.

Summary:

Employees are expected to model professionalism and good character. This includes respecting confidentiality, treating everyone fairly, and maintaining strong professional boundaries. Staff must always protect students' welfare and set an example of integrity.



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4. Prohibited Conduct

Policy:

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.
- Romantic or sexual relationships with students.
- Harassment or discrimination of any kind.
- Substance use or possession on school property.
- Altering or falsifying grades, records, or documents.
- Misuse of school funds, property, or resources.
- Failure to report suspected abuse or misconduct.

Summary:

No employee may ever harm or exploit a student, change records dishonestly, misuse school resources, or ignore signs of abuse. Even if you only suspect something is wrong, you must take action. Protecting students comes first.

5. Duty to Report Misconduct

Policy:

- All personnel must report misconduct that affects student health, safety, or welfare.
- Reports should be made to the Head of School or Ethics Compliance Officer.
- If the Head of School is involved, reports go to the Board of Directors.
- Reports must be written and submitted within 24 hours.

Summary:

If you witness or suspect misconduct, you must report it immediately. You cannot wait to see if the problem goes away. Reporting protects students, employees, and the school.

6. Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment, or Neglect

Policy:

- All employees are mandatory reporters under Florida law (§39.201, F.S.).
- Suspicions must be reported immediately to the DCF Abuse Hotline:
 - 1-800-962-2873 (phone)
 - www.myflorida.com/abuse (online)
- Reports may be made anonymously.

Summary:

If you believe a child is being harmed, you must make a report right away. You don't need proof—only reasonable suspicion. Florida law protects those who report in good faith.



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7. Investigation Procedures

Policy:

- The Head of School or Ethics Compliance Officer will review all reports.
- Immediate safety measures will be taken if necessary.
- Investigations may involve law enforcement, DCF, or DOE.
- Findings will be documented, and disciplinary action applied.

Summary:

Once a report is made, the school acts quickly to ensure safety. The accused may be removed from duty during investigation. Outside agencies may be brought in. Every case is handled fairly, but protecting students is the top priority.

8. Training Requirements

Policy:

- All employees complete annual ethics training.
- Training covers abuse recognition, reporting procedures, and professional boundaries.
- Records are kept in personnel files.

Summary:

Each year, employees review expectations, learn how to recognize warning signs, and practice proper reporting steps. This ensures staff are always prepared to protect students.

9. Whistleblower Protections

Policy:

- Employees who report misconduct in good faith are protected from retaliation.
- Retaliation may result in termination of the retaliator.

Summary:

Employees will not be punished for speaking up. Florida law protects whistleblowers, and VPA enforces this protection strictly.

10. Consequences for Violations

Policy:

Consequences for misconduct may include:

- Verbal/written reprimands
- Suspension with or without pay
- Termination of employment
- Referral to law enforcement, DOE, or EPC

Summary:

Breaking these rules has serious consequences. Depending on the severity, it could mean retraining, job loss, or even criminal charges.



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11. Posting & Parent Notification

Policy:

- This policy will be posted in staff areas.
- It will be included in employee handbooks.
- Parents receive a simplified summary in the Parent & Student Handbook.

Summary:

Students, parents, and staff must all know how to report misconduct. By posting and sharing these rules, the school ensures transparency and awareness.

12. Record Keeping

Policy:

- Reports, investigations, and training certificates will be securely maintained.
- Records are accessible only to authorized personnel.

Summary:

Every report and training record is carefully stored to ensure compliance and accountability. These records protect both the school and its staff.

13. Policy Review & Updates

Policy:

- The policy will be reviewed annually by school leadership and the Board of Directors.
- Updates will be made to remain compliant with law and best practices.

Summary:

Each year, this handbook is checked against updated laws. If changes are needed, the policy is revised, and staff are retrained to stay up to date.

14. Acknowledgment of Understanding

Policy:

- All staff must sign an acknowledgment form confirming they understand and will follow the policy.

Summary:

Signing the form shows employees understand the rules and agree to follow them. This also confirms they know how to respond to misconduct or abuse.

Signed,


Dumaka Atkins
Educator



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Acknowledgment Form

I, _____, have received, read, and understand the Visions Preparatory Academy Ethics in Education Policies and Procedures Handbook. I agree to abide by these standards as a condition of my employment.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signed,

Dumaka Atkins

Dumaka Atkins
Educator

