

Bluestem Hall Nature School
Employee Code of Professional Conduct Policy

Part 1: Illinois Educator Code of Ethics

Part 2. Sexual Conduct Policy (Faith's Law)

PART 1. ILLINOIS EDUCATOR CODE OF ETHICS (23 II Adm Code 22.20)

The Illinois Educator Code of Ethics was developed by members of the Illinois Educator Code of Ethics Advisory Group. The advisory group was comprised of esteemed educators from across the state of Illinois whose charge included drafting a set of recommendations for the Illinois State Board of Education to be used as the basis for developing the Code of Ethics for Educators in Illinois. In preparing these recommendations, the advisory group:

- Researched, reviewed, and discussed the content in the Code of Ethics for Educators from other states, education agencies and associations;
- Researched, reviewed, and discussed various formats/frameworks to use in documenting the recommendations for the Illinois Educator Code of Ethics;
- Developed a matrix comparing the Code of Ethics from 10 education associations;
- Developed definitions for "Educator" and the "Illinois Educator Code of Ethics";
- Established a framework and descriptions for professional behavior and responsibilities, and promoted high standards of practice; and
- Considered existing state regulations in the development of the Illinois Educator Code of Ethics recommendations.

Part 22, Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators, was written in response to a need identified in the process of developing the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, which are contained in Part 24 of agency rules. After researching and evaluating the content, format, and frameworks from codes of ethics for educators in numerous states, education agencies, and associations, the Illinois Educator Code of Ethics Advisory Group chose the Rhode Island Educator Code of Professional Responsibility as a model for developing the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators. This code, which is founded on the premise that Illinois educators must meet the educational needs of each student, defines five core principles: (1) Responsibility to Students; (2) Responsibility to Self; (3) Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession; (4) Responsibility to Parents, Families and Communities; and (5) Responsibility to the Illinois State Board of Education.

ILLINOIS EDUCATOR CODE OF ETHICS

23 II Adm Code 22.20

Preamble

Educators fundamentally believe that meeting the educational needs of each student is critical to the profession. The Illinois Educators' Code of Ethics is a set of core principles, values, and responsibilities that sets expectations to guide practice and inspire professional excellence in relation to federal, state, and local policies, rules, regulations, and collective bargaining agreements. Illinois educators encourage the application of these core principles throughout the education community.

Definition of Educator

An educator is a person who holds or is applying for a certificate or approval, or is enrolled in an Illinois pre-service education preparation program.

Principles

The Illinois Educator Code of Ethics contains five core principles which provide a foundation for the responsibilities and commitments of Illinois Educators.

1. Responsibility to Students
2. Responsibility to Self
3. Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession
4. Responsibility to Parents, Families and Communities
5. Responsibility to the Illinois State Board of Education

PRINCIPLE 1: RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS

The Illinois educator is committed to creating, promoting, and implementing a learning environment that is accessible to each student, enables students to achieve the highest academic potential, and maximizes their ability to succeed in academic and employment settings as a responsible member of society. Illinois educators:

- Embody the Standards for the School Service Personnel Certificate (23 Ill. Adm. Code 23), the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (23 Ill. Adm. Code 24), and Standards for Administrative Certification (23 Ill. Adm. Code 29), as applicable to the educator, in the learning environment;
- Respect the inherent dignity and worth of each student by assuring that the learning environment is characterized by respect and equal opportunity for each student, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language or socio-economic status;
- Maintain a professional relationship with students at all times;
- Provide a curriculum based on high expectations for each student that addresses individual differences through the design, implementation, and adaptation of effective instruction; and

- Foster in each student the development of attributes that will enhance skills and knowledge necessary to be a contributing member of society.

PRINCIPLE 2: RESPONSIBILITY TO SELF

The Illinois Educator is committed to establishing high professional standards for their practice and striving to meet these standards through their performance. Illinois Educators:

- Assume responsibility and accountability for their performance and continually strive to demonstrate proficiency and currency in both content knowledge and professional practice;
- Develop and implement personal and professional goals with attention to professional standards through a process of self assessment and professional development;
- Represent their professional credentials and qualifications accurately; and
- Demonstrate a high level of professional judgment

PRINCIPLE 3: RESPONSIBILITY TO COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

The Illinois Educator is committed to collaborating with school and district colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning. Illinois Educators:

- Collaborate with colleagues in the local school and district to meet local and state educational standards;
- Work together to create a respectful, professional and supportive school climate that allows all educators to maintain their individual professional integrity;
- Seek out and engage in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession;
- Promote participation in educational decision making processes;
- Encourage promising candidates to enter the education profession; and
- Support the preparation, induction, mentoring and professional development of educators.

PRINCIPLE 4: RESPONSIBILITY TO PARENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

The Illinois Educator will collaborate, build trust, and respect confidentiality with parents, families, and communities to create effective instruction and learning environments for each student. Illinois Educators:

- Aspire to understand and respect the values and traditions of the diversity represented in the community and in their learning environments;
- Encourage and advocate for fair and equal educational opportunities for each student;
- Develop and maintain professional relationships with parents, families, and communities;

- Promote collaboration and support student learning through regular and meaningful communication with parents, families, and communities; and
- Cooperate with community agencies that provide resources and services to enhance the learning environment.

PRINCIPAL 5: RESPONSIBILITY TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Illinois Educator is committed to supporting the Administrative and School Codes, state and federal laws and regulations, and the Illinois State Board of Education's standards for highly qualified educators. Illinois Educators:

- Provide accurate communication to the Illinois State Board of Education concerning all certification matters;
- Maintain appropriate certification for employment; and
- Comply with state and federal codes, laws, and regulations.

Part II: Sexual Conduct Policy (Faith's Law)

Sexual Misconduct Defined: (Section 85.8 (c) of the School Code)

1. Any act, including, but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, by an employee or agent of the school district, charter school or nonpublic school with direct contact with a student that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Such an act includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:
2. A sexual or romantic invitation.
3. Dating or soliciting a date.
4. Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog.
5. Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student
6. Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.
7. A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with a student.

Expectations and Guidelines for Employee-Student Boundaries

- All employees must maintain professional employee-student boundaries and relationships with students. This includes meeting expectations and following guidelines for employee-student

boundaries. These expectations and guidelines apply to all professional, educational support, and contracted employees.

- Employees may have pre-existing relationships with families of students outside of school. These expectations and guidelines do not apply to employee-student relationships based in preexisting relationships, including nuclear or extended families. These expectations and guidelines are not intended to prohibit such interactions, provided that an awareness of employee-student boundaries is maintained at all times.
- While some employee-student boundaries are clear and easy to recognize, there are some unclear, gray areas that employees must plan for and respond to with sound judgment. This means recognizing the potential negative consequences for students and/or employees engaging in certain behaviors with students or allowing inappropriate conduct to continue. Employees may use time, place, and circumstances as a guiding principle.

Employee-Student Boundaries Categories

- Emotional Boundaries – both the employee’s own emotional state and self-regulation as well as students’ emotional states and developmental abilities to self-regulate.
- Relationship/Power Boundaries – recognizing that the employee-student relationship is unequal and employees must safeguard against misusing positions of power.
- Communication Boundaries – how and what employees communicate to students, including communication that is verbal, nonverbal, in person, or via electronic means.
- Physical Boundaries – physical contact between employees and students.

Expectations for employees and agents of the school regarding how to maintain a professional relationship with students, including the expectations for staff-student boundaries; recognize the age and developmental level of the students served; establish guidelines for all of the following situations:

1. Transporting a student
2. Taking or possessing a photo or video of a student
3. Meeting with a student or contacting a student outside of the employee’s or agent’s professional role
4. Educators are Mandated Reporters
5. Employee training related to child abuse and educator ethics

TRANSPORTING A STUDENT

Except during an emergency situation, employees may not transport a student of the school (that they are not related to) without written permission forms from the students parents and school chief administrator outlining the permission and frequency of transportation.

TAKING OR POSSESSING A PHOTO OR VIDEO OF A STUDENT

Taking and using photos/videos of students is acceptable for educational purposes, with student and parent/guardian consent, while abiding by student records laws, policies, and procedures.

MEETING WITH A STUDENT OR CONTACTING A STUDENT OUTSIDE OF THE EMPLOYEE'S OR AGENT'S PROFESSIONAL ROLE

- Inviting students who need additional instructional support to your classroom for such additional support.
- Meeting with a student off campus with parent/guardian knowledge and/or permission, e.g., when providing prearranged support or educational services.
- Limiting communication to what is necessary for educational and/or extracurricular activities.
- Using organization-approved methods for communicating with students and parents such as Brightwheel.

EDUCATORS ARE MANDATED REPORTERS

School personnel (including administrators and certified and noncertified school employees) are Mandated Reporters. Child abuse is the mistreatment of a child under the age of 18 by:

- A parent or their romantic partner.
- An immediate relative or someone living in their home.
- A caretaker such as a babysitter or daycare worker.
- Any person responsible for the child's welfare, such as a health care provider, educator, coach or youth program volunteer.

The mistreatment can either result in injury or put the child at serious risk of injury. Child abuse can be physical (i.e. bruises or broken bones), sexual (i.e. fondling or incest) or mental (emotional injury or psychological illness).

Neglect is the failure of a parent or caretaker to meet "minimal parenting" standards for providing adequate supervision, food, clothing, medical care, shelter or other basic needs.

Completion of Illinois Department of Child & Family Services Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status form upon employment.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING RELATED TO CHILD ABUSE AND EDUCATOR ETHICS

- Yearly Training:
 - Understanding Domestic Violence
 - Effects of Domestic Violence on Children and Adolescents
 - Warning Signs of Domestic Violence in Children and Adolescents
 - Violence with Expectant/Parenting Youth
 - Child Abuse and Neglect -Identification and Mandated Reporting
 - Signs of Sexual Abuse
 - Signs of Emotional Maltreatment
 - “When Should I Call the Hotline” as a Mandated Reporter
- Yearly Review of Educator Code of Ethics
- Faith’s Law Training
 - What is sexual misconduct?
 - Expectations for Professional Relationships with Students
- Title IX Training and Review