

# Appendix A:

## [XX School] Code of Conduct

### For Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Staff, Volunteers, and Others

Effective Date: XX

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*This Code of Conduct (“Code”) serves as a guide to ethical conduct and professional behavior standards at XX SCHOOL.*

XX SCHOOL is committed to the safety and protection of children and all members of our school community. The Code applies to all faculty, staff, employees, volunteers and students who represent the school and who interact with children or young people in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity.

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#### **Introduction:**

The public and private conduct of faculty, staff, employees, students, and volunteers acting on behalf of XX SCHOOL can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work, including procuring safe and healthy environments for all of our students.

The **Purpose** of this Code is to:

- Insure the health, welfare and safety of our students and other members of our school community.
- Define and clarify the parameters of professional behavioral expectations and practices with regard to our school.
- Assure our parent and community stakeholders, accreditation agencies, and others of the accountability of the educators/staff who work at our school.

**Background Checks** – Although XX SCHOOL understands that no background checks are 100% reliable, XX SCHOOL conducts professional background screening of the school’s personnel prior to employment and reserves the right to conduct periodic screenings of the school’s employees and other affiliates or contractors as may be deemed appropriate to insure the safety of our children and staff.

**Disciplinary Action** -- Failure to maintain good moral and ethical standards with regard to children and model professionalism with colleagues, parents and others in the school community as may or may not be defined exclusively in this Code may result in reprimand, censure, or dismissal.

**School Community Standards** – The following standards are intended to outline expectations and accountability for those individuals at our school who assume the important responsibility of working with children.

#### **Our School Community Standards:**

**Standard 1: Good Moral Character & Personal Fitness** — Because of the nature of their trusted positions, educators and staff members must exhibit good moral character and personal fitness. This is defined as the traits necessary to have contact with, teach, and/or perform supervision of children. These traits include but are not limited to those described in the school’s handbook policies and in this Code.

In addition, all employees who work with children must undergo a **background check** providing reasonable assurance as to the lack of conviction of any crime involving:

- The physical neglect of a child.
- The physical injury or death of a child.
- The sexual exploitation of a child.
- Sexual offenses involving children.
- The production, distribution, reception, or possession of child pornography.
- The sale or purchase of a child.
- A conviction of any crime that would call into question the individual’s worthiness to work with children.

**Standard 2: Ethical Conduct toward Students** — School employees and support staff should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and out of the classroom. They are also

responsible for maintaining **physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries** in such interactions.

**Unethical and/or Illegal Conduct** that also violates such boundaries includes, but is not limited to:

- Striking, hurting, or causing a student physical pain.
- Physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses.
- Engaging in any harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, sex, sexual identity, national origin, religion, or disability.
- Covert or overt sexual behaviors involving students.
- Any sexual advance or fostering an inappropriate relationship with a student; either written, verbal, or physical.
- Sexual intercourse or committing any unlawful sexual act.
- Seductive speech or gestures.
- Indecent exposure.
- Furnishing or allowing students to consume tobacco, alcohol, illegal/unauthorized drugs or inappropriate reading materials.
- Any other act of child abuse—including physical and verbal abuse, child endangerment, or acts of cruelty to children.

**Communication with Children** – is governed by the key safety concept of transparency. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between XX SCHOOL parents, administration, teachers, personnel, volunteers, and minors:

- Where possible, email exchanges between a minor and a person acting on behalf of the school are to be made using a school email address.
- Faculty, staff, and volunteers who use any form of online communications including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging to communicate with minors may only do so for activities involving school business.
- Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.

**General Physical Contact** -- Physical contact with children can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it, and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. School employees and support staff should show **prudent discretion** before touching another person, especially children and youth, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or

received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration.

**One-on-one Meetings & After-School Related Activities** – Interactions with a child or youth are best held in a public area or in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with an open door or window that provides visibility; including informing another adult when appropriate. The same prudence should be applied for after-school activities.

**Student Discipline** – School personnel and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child and should adhere to the school’s handbook policies on discipline.

**Standard 3: Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues** — Ethical conduct between colleagues and other community members upholds the following principles:

- A colleague does not engage in any verbal, physical, or sexual harassment of another colleague. **Sexual harassment** includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances and invitations, requests for sexual favors, unwanted physical contact, as well as other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as the display or transmission of sexually suggestive objects, pictures or cartoons; physical gestures of a sexual nature; sexual epithets, jokes and insults; or any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. **Harassment can also be** based on characteristics other than sexual or gender related, such as race, religion, national origin, sexual identity, or disability. It can take the form of epithets, jokes and insults or other forms of mistreatment.
- A colleague does not make false statements about other colleagues; falsify or misrepresent his or her credentials, school-related activities, or the school community.
- A colleague does not reveal confidential information about colleagues unless required by law.

**Standard 4: Ethical Conduct toward Performance and Confidentiality** — Ethical conduct by teachers and staff includes:

- **Student Assessment & Reporting** – Teachers must accurately report and record students test scores and provide fair and reliable assessments. Teachers are also strictly prohibited from assisting students during the taking of any standardized tests.

- Teacher Hiring & Evaluation Process – Supervisors should engage in practices that involve clearly defined rubrics, designed to ensure success, fairness, process integrity, and reliable evaluations.
- Falsification or Misrepresentation of Facts or Documents – School personnel must avoid the falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or the erroneously reporting of facts, reports, or other documents as may be requested from time to time from the school’s administration, outside police or governing authorities, or in the course of an official investigation.
- Unauthorized Professional Practices – Engagement in unauthorized professional practices such as the practice of medicine, including psychiatric medicine, or providing legal, financial, or medical advice (except in emergency situations where such behavior is used to protect the life of a student or colleague) is strictly prohibited.
- Other Professional & Ethical Practices -- includes maintaining the **confidentiality** of students and staff academic, health, disciplinary, and other personal records; and having an understanding as to when **transparency** is necessary (e.g., student has a nut allergy) in order to promote the health, welfare or safety of students/staff.

**Standard 5: Ethical Conduct in the Use of Alcohol or Controlled Substances in the Course of Working Hours** — Faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers should refrain from the illegal possession and/or illegal use of controlled substances and/or alcohol at all times, and from the use of tobacco products, alcohol and/or drugs when working with children.

**Standard 6: Ethical Conduct toward Remuneration and Gifts** — In the course of professional activity, coercing or forcing a student or parent to provide remuneration for items, services or favors as a private transaction is not allowed. This includes offering to pay students for favors, or taking money from students in return for goods or services. Other ethical conduct considerations are as follows:

- Vendors - School personnel are prohibited from accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal gain in which the appearance of a conflict of interest may exist.
- Gifts - School personnel should also not accept or give gifts to children without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

- Tutoring – School personnel should adhere to the school’s handbook policies with regard to tutoring students or other services.

**Standard 7: Ethical Conduct toward Honoring Employment Contracts** — School personnel should honor all of the terms as contained in their employment contracts other than for unforeseeable reasons in which the school may formally release the employee from the contract prior to the employee abandoning any of its provisions.

**Standard 8: Ethical Conduct toward School Property and Funds** — the unauthorized, misuse, theft, or intentional damage of school property and the misappropriation of school funds is a violation of school policies and subject to severe discipline.

**Standard 9: Ethical Conduct toward Reporting Incidents** — School personnel must intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that children are being abused in any way; or any other violation of this Code. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to the appropriate school authorities as further described in handbook/policy of the school. In particular, the following are prohibited:

- Knowing failure to report physical abuse or sexual misconduct by another school employee, parent or adult.
- Knowing failure to inform the Head of School, counselor or authority about the commission of an act of unprofessional conduct by another educational practitioner.

**Standard 10: Ethical Conduct toward Acknowledgement and Adherence to this Code** — Members of the school community to which this Code applies must read this Code in its entirety and periodically sign-off; that is, agreeing to all of the Code’s standards as summarized below.

**XX SCHOOL 'S STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SIGNATURE**

I promise to strictly follow all of the rules and guidelines as contained in the school's Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in the school's programs. The Code includes the following key areas of my responsibility:

I will:

- To the best of my ability, promote the good health, welfare, and safety of all members of our school community and uphold high ethical standards.
- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with children and/or youth in settings that are open and visible to others; as well as never be alone at school activities without another adult being notified or present.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth, while also adhering to the school's policies on student discipline.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children – when necessary – only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- Avoid transactions with students, parents, or vendors that may be perceived as conflicts of interest.
- Comply fully with the school's policies on anti-harassment, representation and confidentiality standards, safeguarding of property and funds, and the honoring of contracts.
- Comply fully with the school's mandatory reporting requirements and the school's policy to report suspected child abuse; and other violations of the Code or other school policies.

I will not:

- Touch or speak to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading children and/or youth.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children and/or youth.
- Accept or give gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Communicate with children over unmonitored e-mail.
- Use Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media to communicate with students except for activities strictly involving school business.

I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to children and youth under the auspices of XX SCHOOL I am subject to a criminal history background check.

**Acknowledgement and agreement to comply with the XX SCHOOL Code of Conduct**

My signature confirms that I have read this Code of Conduct and that as a person working with children and youth I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from XX SCHOOL.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **XX School COMMON AGREEMENT (EXPECTATIONS OF CONDUCT WITH CHILDREN)**

*“To ensure the safety of children and the well-being of our school community”*

Every individual in the school community should be treated with dignity and respect. As a school we have a special obligation to children. As such, we promote a safe and positive community. The XX SCHOOL Common Agreement is a set of written guidelines designed to safeguard children and all members of the school community, and ensure safe teaching, behavior, and practice within XX SCHOOL.

### **Appropriate Practice**

It is our responsibility to promote the welfare of children. As a member of the XX SCHOOL community, **I will:**

- Act as a role model for students through my words and actions.
- Respond to student physical contact such as hugs or handshakes in a culturally-sensitive and age-appropriate manner.
- Ensure that bathroom visits are safe and respectful of student privacy.
- Exhibit and encourage open communication.
- Follow XX SCHOOL protocols for child safety when supervising school field trips and overnight trips.
- Alert another staff member when working with students after school.
- Hold myself and others accountable for keeping children safe.
- Report suspected child abuse to my administrator.

### **Inappropriate Practice**

It is our responsibility to act if we have concerns about the welfare of a child.

**I will not:**

- Initiate or encourage any physical contact while alone with a student.
- Transport students without parent consent unless it is a medical emergency.
- Use alcohol or other inappropriate substances on school property or while attending student-related school functions away from XX SCHOOL.
- Accept gifts or give gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents.
- Invite a student to my home or arrange to meet with a student away from school property without parent consent.
- Meet individually with a student in a closed or unobservable setting.
- Communicate privately with students by phone or through social media platforms for non-school related reasons.
- Post photos or other information about students for non-school related reasons that could increase the vulnerability of students.

I confirm that I have read and understood the **XX SCHOOL Common Agreement** and agree to follow the above standards of practice. I understand that any action inconsistent with this, or failure to take action as mandated by this Common Agreement, may result in disciplinary action.

Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_