

# Standards of Ethical Conduct

Spring Hill Christian Academy

Spring Hill, Florida

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

SHCA's staff and administrators must demonstrate and uphold standards of ethical conduct both in and outside of the classroom. SHCA will strive to ensure staff and administration achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct and uphold the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida.

SHCA 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.

SHCA's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for 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.

SHCA's care and concern for the student requires that the instructional personnel:

1. 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.
2. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
3. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
4. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
5. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
6. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
7. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, handicapping condition (as can be reasonably accommodated), or social and family background and shall make a reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
8. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
9. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

SHCA, 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:

1. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
2. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition (as such reasonable accommodations are available) if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization
3. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.

4. 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.
5. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

### **Training Requirement**

- All employees, educational support, instructional personnel and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct.
- Training is provided annually, with subsequent training as needed for all employees and administrators.
- Training includes examples of violations of the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct and potential penalties, information on how to properly identify and report child abuse or neglect, procedures on how to report misconduct of other instructional personnel and school administrators, requirements of self-reporting criminal charges, the nature and consequences of disqualifying offenses, the importance of being a role model, and the fiduciary responsibility of being an educator.

### **Reporting Misconduct by Instructional Personnel and Administrators**

All employees, educational support, instructional personnel and administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel 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 the current Principal, Michael Willis ([mwillis@springhillca.com](mailto:mwillis@springhillca.com)).

Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made in writing to the Chairman of the SHCA School Board at [ryan@springhillbc.com](mailto:ryan@springhillbc.com)

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 school's Main Office and on our website at: [www.springhillca.com](http://www.springhillca.com)

### **Failure to Report**

Failure to report misconduct can result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary action can be warnings, suspension or termination. Discipline will depend on the type of misconduct or failure to report misconduct. Discipline will be determined by 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/>.

### **Signs of Physical Abuse**

The child may have unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, or other injuries such as 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)