

# Apple Tree Academy

## Employee Ethics Policy

### ETHICAL CONDUCT

Standards of Ethical Conduct for Instructional Personnel and Administrators

The following Standards of ethical Conduct are adapted from “The Code of Ethics and The Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida” promulgated by the Florida Department of Education.

Apple Tree Academy disqualifies from employment any instructional personnel or school administrator who is convicted of an act listed under s.1012.315, F.S.

Apple Tree Academy conducts an employment history check before employing instructional personnel or school administrators in any position that requires direct contact with students and documents the findings.

Apple Tree Academy screens the personnel or administrator through the Professional Practice Database of Disciplinary Actions and the Teacher Certification Database and documents the findings.

Apple Tree Academy prohibits confidentiality agreements with instructional personnel or school administrators who are dismissed, terminated, or resign in lieu of termination due to misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student.

Our teachers and staff are highly respected professionals and members of our communities; Apple Tree Academy works hard to hold employees to a high standard of ethics and principles. Unfortunately, employees’ misconduct occurs and is a serious concern for communities and schools across the country.

Every Apple Tree Academy employee should be aware of the following behaviors that might be indicative of misconduct:

- Being alone with a student in dark or closed room or secluded area
- Behaving in an overly friendly or familiar way or failing to maintain an appropriate professional boundary with a student
- Using forceful or unnecessary physical contact with a student
- Administering discipline not compliant with school policy
- Accepting or offering of gifts for return of a favor or privilege from students or colleagues
- Badgering or habitually teasing a student
- Mocking or belittling a student
- Chronically embarrassing a student
- Displaying prejudice or bigotry against a student
- Suspicion of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Failing to properly supervise students or to ensure student safety
- Cheating, falsifying information or testing violations
- Retaliating against a student or colleague for reporting misconduct

- Bantering or engaging in colloquial or slang communications with a student
- Directing or using profane, offensive, or explosive language in the presence of students
- Making suggestive comments or overtures toward a student or colleague
- The following policies are strictly enforced at AEF Schools:

Apple Tree Academy employees are required to attend complete training on the adopted standards of ethical conduct.

Apple Tree Academy employees have a duty to report misconduct by instructional personnel. This report is required to be done immediately.

Employees who should be reported are classrooms teachers, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, social workers, career specialists, psychologists, principal, assistant principal, and deans.

Consequences for failing to report misconduct may include written reprimand, suspension with or without pay, termination of employment, and discipline/sanctions on an educator's certificate.

Misconduct can be reported to the principal or executive director. (Call school for contact information)

It is important to document the details of the event and to secure evidence, if available. Employees reporting misconduct will be sheltered under the liability protections provided under ss.39.203 and 768.095, F.S.

## **FLORIDA STATUTES AND RULES**

Florida Statutes s. 1006.061 states all employees and agents of the district school board, charter schools and private schools that accept scholarship students have an obligation to report misconduct by an instructional personnel member or school administrator

Florida Statutes s. 1012.33 outlines disciplinary procedures regarding district employment contracts with instructional personnel staff, supervisors, and school principals

Florida Statutes s. 1012.795 provides the Education Practices Commission the authority to issue disciplinary action against an individual's Florida Educator certificate

Florida Statutes s. 1012.796 provides authority for the Department of Education to investigate and prosecute allegations of educator misconduct

Florida Statute s. 1012.01 defines public school instructional personnel, administrative personnel, school volunteers, education support employees and managers

State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.001 defines the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida

State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.006 defines the Principals of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida

## **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 affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol abuse 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 Latoya Freeman, Director, [lfreeman@apple-tree-academy.com](mailto:lfreeman@apple-tree-academy.com) or (772) 286-1979.

Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to John or Lisa Chitty, Owners, [jchitty@apple-tree-academy.com](mailto:jchitty@apple-tree-academy.com) or [lchitty@apple-tree-academy.com](mailto:lchitty@apple-tree-academy.com) or (561) 758-3002 or (561) 346-2138.

Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practice Services.

Policies and procedures for reporting misconduct by instructional personal or school administrators which affect the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted in the office and on our website at [www.apple-tree-academy.com](http://www.apple-tree-academy.com) under the “About” tab.

### **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; 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 in need 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 by law, or reporting in good faith any instance of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the department of 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 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).