

# Employee Code of Professional Conduct Policy

Pursuant to Illinois' Faith's Law requirements, the Montessori School of Long Grove adopts this Employee Code of Professional Conduct Policy.



## I. Educator Code of Conduct

Montessori School of Long Grove employees must follow the [Illinois Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators](#). This provides a foundation for the responsibilities and commitments of educators within the State of Illinois. The following are the 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
- 5) Responsibility to the Illinois State Board of Education

## II. Sexual Misconduct

The success of students in school relies on safe learning environments and healthy relationships with school personnel. It is important for staff to always maintain a professional relationship with students and to define staff-student boundaries to protect students from sexual misconduct by staff and staff from the appearance of impropriety. As bystanders, educators may have knowledge of concerning behaviors that no one else is aware of, so they need to understand the definition of "sexual misconduct".

Sexual misconduct, defined by Faith's Law (105 ILCS 5/22-85.5) means 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 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:

- 1) A sexual or romantic invitation.
- 2) Dating or soliciting a date.
- 3) Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog.
- 4) Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student.
- 5) Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.
- 6) A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student.

"Grooming" as now defined in Section 11-25 of the Criminal Code is "when a person knowingly uses a computer on-line service, Internet service, local bulletin board service, or any other device capable of electronic data storage or transmission, performs an act in person or by conduct through a third party, or uses written communication to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, or attempt to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, a child, a child's guardian, or another person believed to be the person to be a child or a child's guardian, to commit any sex offense as defined in Section 2 of the Sex Offender Registration Act, to distribute photographs depicting

the sex organs of the child, or to otherwise engage in any unlawful sexual conduct with a child or with another person believed by the person to be a child. As used in this Section, 'child' means a person under 17 years of age."

### **III. Expectations of School Employees**

All employees at the Montessori School of Long Grove must always maintain professional relationships with students and follow the expectations for staff-student boundaries.

Employees must also follow the guidelines below:

- 1) Employees are always representatives of the school and will maintain professional relationships with students at all times, recognizing the age and developmental level of the students served. This includes meeting with a student or contacting a student outside of the employee's professional role.
- 2) Employees are strictly prohibited from using any form of communication with students (emails, letters, notes, text messages, phone calls, conversations) that includes any subject matter that would be deemed unprofessional and/or inappropriate between an employee and a student.
- 3) While the school does not provide transportation on a regular basis, special circumstances (i.e. field trips) create the need for private transportation of students. Employees are to follow the same guidelines as volunteer chaperones when transporting students, and it is recommended that an employee refrains from transporting a single student, and rather has a group of students, unless an emergency arises. In this case, the employee should notify the school office of the transportation needs before leaving. Parental approval of field trip transportation is also required prior to field trips.
- 4) In addition, employees will take particular care in taking or possessing a photo or a video of a student. Parents/guardians should first give permission for photos and videos to be taken by employees of the school. Photos and videos of students should serve an educational purpose, and the employee should only maintain those photos and videos for as long as the educational purpose requires. Once the purpose is met, the employee should no longer maintain the photos and videos.

### **IV. School Employees are Mandated Reports**

Mandated reporters must notify the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) immediately when a mandated reporter has reasonable cause to believe a child is an abused or neglected child under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/3), including reasonable cause to believe that a child was a victim of grooming as defined by 720 ILCS 5/11-25.

### **V. Employee Training Related to Child Abuse and Educator Ethics**

All employees will receive required employee training that is related to child abuse and educator ethics that are applicable under State and federal law.

A violation of the employee code of professional conduct may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment. Failure of an employee to report a violation of the employee code of professional conduct policy by another employee may subject that employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has also created a Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource guide, which is available here: [Faith's Law Resource Guide](#)