

# **DIOCESE OF ORLANDO**

## **CODE OF ETHICS FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATORS**

Catholic educators are by virtue held to the highest possible standard of excellence. The Catholic educator (1) maintains a professional concern for the student and the development of the student's potential; (2) is aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents, and Church community, and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity; and (3) is dedicated to the on-going formation of the Catholic values required for effective service to others.

The following disciplinary rule shall constitute the Code of Ethics for Catholic Educators of the Diocese of Orlando. The Code of Ethics is based upon the Catholic faith and diocesan policies and procedures. Violation of any of these principles can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination and/or removal from position.

### **COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS**

The Catholic educator's primary concern will always be for the welfare of the student.

Obligation to the student requires that the Catholic educator:

- a. Shall provide educational assistance in a respectful manner.
- b. 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.
- c. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
- d. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
- e. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- f. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights, if any, existing under civil law to the extent the law applies to Catholic Schools and recognized religious institutions.
- g. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, handicapping condition, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
- h. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
- i. Shall protect the student's right to privacy by keeping in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service.

### **COMMITMENT TO THE MINISTRY OF TEACHING**

The Catholic educator carries out teaching responsibilities in a manner that reflects the highest level of integrity and professionalism. Obligation to the ministry of teaching requires that the Catholic educator:

- a. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
- b. Shall uphold the quality of Catholic education by continuing education to increase knowledge and skills.
- c. Shall recognize and respect the authority of the parish or Diocese when communicating with parents, students and the community.

- d. Shall not, on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background, deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.
- e. 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.
- f. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.
- g. Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.
- h. Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.
- i. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position.
- j. Shall report within 48 hours to the School Principal and Superintendent of Catholic Schools any arrests/charges by law enforcement other than a minor traffic violation. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, shall self-report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilt or Nolo Contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within 48 hours after the final judgment.
- k. Shall immediately observe the reporting procedures outlined in the Diocese of Orlando Policies on Child Sexual Abuse upon the knowledge or suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been subjected to any form of abuse, child sexual abuse, or neglect by any person, including another diocesan employee or volunteer, religious, or clergy.

### **COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY**

The Catholic educator supports the Catholic community by consistently upholding and preserving the teachings and traditions of the Church. Obligation to the community requires that the Catholic educator shall:

- a. Regard the school as an integral part of the parish or Diocese and a force for preparing students for future leadership.
- b. Challenge students to use the Catholic values throughout their lives.
- c. Shall take reasonable precautions to prevent against interposing personal views which vary from the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- d. Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.
- e. Shall not use school privileges for personal gain or advantage.
- f. Shall accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment.
- g. Shall offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.

## Summary of Instructional Personnel and School Administrators Training

1. I value 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.
2. My primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential. I will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.
3. I am aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of my colleagues, of students, of parents, and of other members of the community. I will strive to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.
4. I understand that I have an affirmative duty and legal responsibility to report any alleged instructional personnel or school administrator misconduct that affects the health, safety or welfare of a student. I also understand that a failure to report such misconduct may result in penalties up to termination of employment and/or revocation of any applicable licenses or certifications. I understand that examples of misconduct that may affect the health, safety or welfare of a student include but are not limited to: drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating, testing violations, physical aggression or accepting favors from students.
5. I further agree to abide by the following procedures when reporting alleged misconduct of an instructional personnel or school administrators:
  - a. Immediately report all allegations or any suspicion of misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student engaged in by any instructional personnel to the school principal; or immediately report all allegations or any suspicion of misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student engaged in by any school administrator to the school principal; or immediately report all allegations or any suspicion of misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student engaged in by the school principal or supervising principal to the Superintendent of Schools;
  - b. Thoroughly document the activities and details of the allegations or event; and
  - c. Secure evidence (if applicable).
6. I further understand that I have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to Florida Department of Children and Families either by phone at 1-800-96Abuse or online at [www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/).
7. We understand that consistent with Fla. Stat. 39.203, any person, official or institution, including employees, who report in good faith any instance of misconduct, child abuse, abandonment, or neglect will be immune from any civil or criminal liability. Additionally, as provided by Fla. Stat. 768.095, any employer who discloses information about a former or current employee in response to a request or inquiry is immune from civil liability for such disclosure or its consequences unless it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that the information disclosed was knowingly false or violated any civil right of the employee.
8. I further understand that every school that accepts scholarship students under the John McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities (Fla. Stat. § 1002.39) or the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program (Fla. Stat. § 220.187) must comply with the terms of the Ethics in Education Act. In addition, acknowledge that all Instructional Personnel and School Administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on this Code of Ethics.

**Trinity Catholic High School**  
**Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect**

CHILD ABUSE The law, as it relates to child abuse and neglect, requires school personnel suspecting abuse or neglect to report such suspicion to the Department of Children and Families. Any faculty member who suspects abuse or neglect should report it to the Administration immediately. Administration will then follow the appropriate procedures and notify the proper authorities according to Diocesan Policy. Proof of abuse or neglect is NOT required. “Reason to believe” is all that is required. The Department of Children and Families is responsible for determining if abuse has actually occurred - Florida Statute Chapter 827. The Abuse – Hotline number is 1-800-96Abuse. <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

All school personnel, including administrators and both certified and non-certified staff, are mandated reporters and are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the Department of Child and Family Services in accordance with Florida law and Diocesan policy. All school personnel shall follow all state laws and Diocesan policies pertaining to the protection of children.

Child Abuse Report All school personnel are required to contact the Department of Child and Family Services (DCF) when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child who is 17 years of age or younger has been harmed or is in danger of being harmed either physically, sexually, or through neglect, and that a caregiver either committed the harm or should have taken steps to protect the child from harm. A call must be made immediately and no one in the workplace is permitted to interfere with or prevent the call. The mandated reporter is obligated to make the report to DCF and may not relinquish that responsibility to the administrator or other school representative. After contacting the DCF, the mandated reporter shall notify the Principal who must then notify the Office of Catholic Schools. An incident report shall be provided to the Office of Catholic Schools within 24 hours.