

# Trinity Christian School

## School Employee Code of Professional Conduct

Pursuant to Illinois's Faith's Law requirements, Trinity Christian School adopts this Code of Professional Conduct for School Employees. Each school is required pursuant to Faith's Law to post this Code of Professional Conduct for School Employees on the school's website and to publish this resource guide, [Faiths-Law-Resource-Guide.pdf](#) in the school's parent/family/student handbook, if the school has one.

### **1. Educator Code of Conduct**

Pursuant to recent Illinois law, Trinity Christian School adopts the relevant portions of the Illinois Educator Code of Conduct, as follows, which applies to school employees who are certified or working toward certification or whose certification has been waived:

**Principle 1: Responsibility to Students.** Educators are committed to creating, promoting, and implementing a learning environment that enables students to achieve their highest academic potential, and to succeed as a responsible member of society. They are committed to embodying standards of professionalism in the learning environment; respecting the inherent dignity and worth of each student by assuring that the learning environment is characterized by respect for each student; maintaining a professional relationship with students at all times; providing a curriculum based on high expectations for students; and fostering in each student the development of attributes that will enhance skills and knowledge necessary to be a contributing member of society.

**Principle 2: Responsibility to Self.** Educators are committed to establishing high professional standards and striving to meet these standards through their performance. They are committed to assuming responsibility and accountability for their performance and striving to demonstrate proficiency and currency in both content knowledge and professional practice; developing and implementing personal and professional goals with attention to professional standards through a process of self-assessment and professional development; representing their professional credentials and qualifications accurately; and using sound professional judgment.

**Principle 3: Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession.** Educators are committed to collaborating with school and Christian colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning and to meet state educational standards; working together to create a respectful, professional and supportive school climate for educators to maintain their individual professional integrity; seeking out and engaging in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession; encouraging promising candidates to enter the education profession; and supporting the preparation, induction, mentoring and professional development of educators.

**Principle 4: Responsibility to School Parents and Families.** Educators are committed to collaborating, striving to build trust, and respecting confidentiality with school parents and families striving to develop and maintain professional relationships with school

parents and families; and promoting collaboration and supporting student learning through communication with parents and families.

**Principle 5:** Responsibility to the ISBE. Educators are committed to supporting the Administrative and School Codes as applicable to Christian schools, state and federal laws and regulations as applicable to Christian schools, and the Illinois State Board of Education's standards for highly qualified educators, as applicable to Christian schools. They are committed to providing accurate communication to the Illinois State Board of Education concerning all certification matters; maintaining appropriate certification for employment; and complying with the state and federal codes, laws, and regulations that apply to Christian schools.

Any employee who sexually harasses a student, willfully or negligently fails to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/), engages in grooming as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25, engages in grooming behaviors, violates boundaries for appropriate school employee student conduct, engages in sexual misconduct as defined in 105 ILCS 5/22-85.5, or otherwise violates an employee conduct standard will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. Trinity Christian School has no tolerance for any unprofessional conduct.

## **2. Sexual misconduct**

- Sexual misconduct, defined by Faith's Law as any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity directed toward or with a minor for the purpose of establishing a romantic or sexual relationship with the minor, including but not limited to a sexual or romantic invitation; dating or soliciting a date; engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog; making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a minor; self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature; and/or a sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the minor (Illinois' Faith's Law, Public Act 102- 0676, (105 ILCS 5/22-85.5).
- Grooming behavior, defined by Faith's Law and the Illinois Criminal Code as knowingly using a computer online service, internet service, local bulletin board service, or any other device capable of electronic data storage or transmission, or 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, or another person believed by the person to be a child, 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.

## **3. Expectations of School Employees**

- School employees are expected to maintain professional relationships and boundaries, recognizing the age and the developmental levels of the students with whom they interact.
- Employees are strictly prohibited from using any form of communication with students (e-mails, letters, notes, text messages, phone calls, conversations) that includes any subject matter that would be deemed unprofessional and/or inappropriate between an employee and student.
- Employees are not permitted to transport students in the employee's privately owned

vehicle, unless the employee has obtained the prior permission of the Head of School to do so.

- Employees are not permitted to take or possess a photo or video of a student on their private devices that would be construed as inappropriate.
- Employees are expected to maintain a professional relationship in all interactions, both in and out of school.

#### **4. Mandated Reporter Responsibilities and Procedures**

- All Trinity employees (including Head of School and certified and non-certified school employees) are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, and must sign the mandated reporter statement required by the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). All employees must complete mandated reporter training within three (3) months of initial employment and at least every three (3) years thereafter. Employees must review the State Board of Education's published materials detailing the information necessary to enable notification to DCFS of an alleged incident of sexual abuse, at least once annually.
- Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe, or receives knowledge that a student may be an abused or neglected child, shall immediately report to the DCFS on its Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873) (within Illinois); 1-217-524-2606 (outside of Illinois); or 1-800-358-5117 (TTY); and follow directions given by DCFS concerning filing a written report within 48 hours with the nearest DCFS field office.
- All instances of reported child abuse and neglect are confidential and only shall be shared with the Head of School and the appropriate state or national agencies. Failure to maintain this confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.