

Professional Conduct / Ethics Policy
St. Francis Xavier Catholic School

It is the responsibility of every employee in every entity to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the association of Catholic entity in addition to:

- The Pastoral Code of Conduct,
- The Attestation of Good Moral Character, and
- The Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Parishes, Missions, Schools and other entities are founded upon the core values of the Catholic Church. Employees are expected to act in a manner consistent with the expressed association of these core values. Employees are also expected to act in an honest and forthright manner in all workplace concerns and to treat all people, including but not limited to co-workers, management, volunteers, clergy, religious and visitors, with respect, and to conduct oneself in an ethical manner consistent with the teachings and the principles of the Catholic Church, consistent with applicable law.

An individual's behavior should be consistent with the policies of the Catholic Church and should not interfere with the operations of the entity or reflect negatively on the entity, the Diocese, or the Catholic Church. Improper behavior will lead to disciplinary action and may include termination of employment.

To maintain a positive work environment, all employees are expected to act in a professional manner at all times:

1. Our school 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.
2. Our primary concern is the student and 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.
3. Concern for the student requires that our instructional personnel:
 - a. 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.
 - b. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
 - 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.
 - g. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, 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 keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

4. 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:
 - a. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
 - b. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.
 - c. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
 - d. 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.
 - e. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

Training Requirements

All employees, educational support, 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, educational support and administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel and school 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 of employees should be made to John Gulley, Principal (john.gulley@sfxm.org). Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to the Diocese of Venice Human Resource Director, Michelle Grabowski (grabowski@dioceseofvenice.org). 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 staff lounge, our official handbook, and our website, www.sfxm.org.

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.

Reports of Misconduct of employees should be made to:

John Gulley, Principal (john.gulley@sfxm.org).

Reports of Misconduct committed by Administrators should be made to:

Michelle Grabowski, Diocesan Director of Human Resources (grabowski@dioceseofvenice.org).

Call 1-800-96-ABUSE or report online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

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 staff lounge.

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 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)