

Employee's Code of Professional Conduct (Faith's Law) Policy

Illinois School Code (105 ILSC 5/22-85.5) requires all schools, including approved nonpublic programs under Section 14-7.02, to create an "Employee Code of Professional Conduct" policy which must be posted on your school's website and be included in any staff, student, or parent handbook. Within this policy, you must incorporate the following information:

- Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators
- Define "sexual misconduct" as stated per School Code
- Identify the expectations for all staff on how to maintain professional relationships with students including times during transportation, taking, or possessing photos or videos of students, meeting or contacting student outside of a staff's professional role.
- Including references on reporting requirements under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act and under Title IX
- Including references to staff training related to child abuse and educator ethics.
- Any violations of this policy will be followed up using Elim's progressive discipline policy.

ILLINOIS EDUCATOR CODE OF ETHICS

Preamble

Educators fundamentally believe that meeting the educational needs of each student is critical to the profession. The Illinois Educators' Code of Ethics is a set of core principles, values, and responsibilities that sets expectations to guide practice and inspire professional excellence in relation to federal, state, and local policies, rules, regulations, and collective bargaining agreements. Illinois educators encourage the application of these core principles throughout the education community.

Definition of Educator

An educator is a person who holds or is applying for a certificate or approval or is enrolled in an Illinois pre-service education preparation program.

Principles

The Illinois Educator Code of Ethics contains five core principles which provide a foundation for the responsibilities and commitments of Illinois Educators.

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

PRINCIPLE 1: RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS

The Illinois educator is committed to creating, promoting, and implementing a learning environment that is accessible to each student, enables students to achieve the highest academic potential, and maximizes their ability to succeed in academic and employment settings as a responsible member of society. Illinois educators:

- Embody the Standards for the School Service Personnel Certificate (23 Ill. Adm. Code 23), the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (23 Ill. Adm. Code 24), and Standards for Administrative Certification (23 Ill. Adm. Code 29), as applicable to the educator, in the learning environment.
- Respect the inherent dignity and worth of each student by assuring that the learning environment is characterized by respect and equal opportunity for each student, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language, or socioeconomic status.
- Maintain a professional relationship with students at all times.
- Provide a curriculum based on high expectations for each student that addresses individual differences through the design, implementation, and adaptation of effective instruction; and
- Foster, 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

The Illinois Educator is committed to establishing high professional standards for their practice and striving to meet these standards through their performance. Illinois Educators:

- Assume responsibility and accountability for their performance and continually strive to demonstrate proficiency and currency in both content knowledge and professional practice.
- Develop and implement personal and professional goals with attention to professional standards through a process of self-assessment and professional development.
- Represent their professional credentials and qualifications accurately; and
- Demonstrate a high level of professional judgment.

PRINCIPLE 3: RESPONSIBILITY TO COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

The Illinois Educator is committed to collaborating with school and district colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning. Illinois Educators: Illinois Educator Code of Ethics

- Collaborate with colleagues in the local school and district to meet local and state educational standards.
- Work together to create a respectful, professional, and supportive school climate that allows all educators to maintain their individual professional integrity.
- Seek out and engage in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession.
- Promote participation in the educational decision-making processes.

- Encourage promising candidates to enter the education profession; and
- Support the preparation, induction, mentoring and professional development of educators.

PRINCIPLE 4: RESPONSIBILITY TO PARENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

The Illinois Educator will collaborate, build trust, and respect confidentiality with parents, families, and communities to create effective instruction and learning environments for each student. Illinois Educators:

- Aspire to understand and respect the values and traditions of the diversity represented in the community and in their learning environments.
- Encourage and advocate for fair and equal educational opportunities for each student.
- Develop and maintain professional relationships with parents, families, and communities.
- Promote collaboration and support student learning through regular and meaningful communication with parents, families, and communities; and
- Cooperate with community agencies that provide resources and services to enhance the learning environment.

Principle 5: Responsibility to the Illinois State Board of Education

The Illinois Educator is committed to supporting the Administrative and School Codes, state and federal laws and regulations, and the Illinois State Board of Education's standards for highly qualified educators. Illinois Educators:

1. Provide accurate communication to the Illinois State Board of Education all certification matters.
2. Maintain appropriate certification for employment; and
3. Comply with state and federal codes, laws, and regulations.

Section C of Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/22-85.5:

In this Section, "sexual misconduct" 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 district, charter school, or nonpublic 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:

- 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 student.
- Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature
- A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student

Standards of Conduct for Maintaining Professional Relationships between Staff and Students

- Section 1: Purpose -
- Section 2: Applicability -
- Section 3: General Standards -
- Section 4: Unacceptable Behavior
- Section 5: Acceptable Supportive/Encouraging Behavior -
- Section 6: Appearances of Impropriety -
- Section 7: Electronic Communication -
- Section 8: Travel/Transportation -
- Section 9: Remote Learning -
- Section 10: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse -
- Section 11: Reporting Possible or Actual Violations of These Standards

SECTION 1: Purpose

Elim Christian Services employs dedicated and professional staff members who provide students with a safe and supportive learning environment. Elim Christian Services encourages healthy relationships between students and school staff and administrators to promote student achievement and success. These standards define appropriate and reasonable boundaries for staff members and students to (1) protect students from sexual misconduct and abuse, and (2) to protect staff members from misunderstandings and false accusations.

SECTION 2: Applicability

The Standards apply to all employees (including and without limitation to teachers, teacher assistants, paraprofessionals, coaches, counselors, clinicians, administrators), volunteers, vendors, consultants, and their employees, and other third parties who interact with students (hereinafter “staff” or “staff members”). For staff members whose children are students of Elim Christian Services or who have family members who attend Elim Christian Services, these Standards do not apply to the usual parent/child or familial relationship.

SECTION 3: General Standards

The following general standards apply to all staff/student interactions.

- Personal contact between students and staff members must always be appropriate to the circumstances, non-sexual and unambiguous in meaning.
- Staff members shall maintain a strictly professional relationship with students, whether on or off school property and during or outside of school hours
- Staff members are responsible for always maintaining professional and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with students.
- Interactions between staff members and students should be based on mutual respect and trust.

- Staff members are responsible for treating all students consistently and in line with the educational mission of Elim.

SECTION 4: Unacceptable Behavior

The following behaviors are unacceptable and therefore strictly prohibited. Each behavior is an example of the inappropriate and prohibited crossing of a boundary and violation of the professional role of a staff member. This list is not exhaustive.

- Staff members shall not target a particular student or students for personal attention or friendship. Gossiping with or about other students or staff and confiding in students beyond the normal staff member-student relationship is prohibited.
- Staff members shall not ask a student to keep a secret, promise to keep a student's secret or coerce a student to confide their personal or family problems. This example does not apply when counseling staff are meeting with students. If a student initiates a discussion of their personal or family problems, staff members are expected to be supportive and to refer the student to the counseling staff member, if appropriate
- Staff members shall not engage in sexual, racial, or religious banter, jokes, or innuendoes with students. Discriminatory and/or banter that marginalizes a student or groups of students is strictly prohibited. This applies to one's actual or perceived membership in one or more of the Protected Categories (such as actual or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation)
- Staff members shall not show inappropriate images, including pornography, violence, or explicit language to students.
- Staff members should not be in possession of or use their personal devices to take or store pictures and/or videos of students.
- Staff members shall not engage in, discuss, or plan future romantic or sexual relationships with students.
- Staff members shall not make sexual advances towards students or flirt with students.
- Staff members shall not engage with a student's flirting or sexual overtures. Any incidents of a student flirting with a staff member or making sexual overtures towards a staff member must be reported pursuant to the section "Reporting Possible or Actual Violations of These Professional Standards."
- Staff members shall not provide or offer to provide alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or paraphernalia to students.
- Staff members shall not single out any one student and provide the student with gift(s) or accept expensive or numerous gifts from students. Nominal gifts to

multiple students/classrooms are permissible. Nominal gifts to teachers as a form of appreciation are acceptable.

- Staff members shall not address students with unique pet names or personalized terms of endearment that suggest a unique and overly familiar relationship. Staff members shall not allow students to address them by their first name alone, nickname, pet names or personalized terms of endearment that suggest an overly familiar relationship.
- Staff members shall not comment on a student's physical appearance.
- Staff members shall not engage in any type of inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.
- Staff members shall not use corporal punishment or engage in any disciplinary action with the intention of producing physical or emotional pain (such as humiliation, embarrassment, threats, or other punitive or demoralizing actions toward a student), this includes conduct towards the children of staff members enrolled in Elim.

SECTION 5: Acceptable Supportive/Encouraging Behavior

It is acceptable to show your students that you care. You should promote affirming, inclusive, and positive environments for students with your words and body language, such as actively listening, appropriately responding and relaying that you are concerned for students. It is acceptable to high five, fist bump, handshake, or say "give yourself a pat on the back." In order to console a student, it is permissible to offer tissue, link arms and offer them time to take a walk or give the student a quick side hug.

SECTION 6: Appearances of Impropriety

Most contact between students and staff is appropriate and professional. However, there are instances or activities that could be considered invasions of appropriate boundaries and can create an actual impropriety or the appearance of impropriety.

In order to protect students and staff, staff should avoid activities with students that present opportunities for inappropriate relationships or that create the appearance that the staff and student are in an inappropriate relationship. Examples of such activities are described below and must be avoided by staff members. This list is not exhaustive and there may be situations where these activities are within professional staff/student boundaries. Such situations where these activities may be within professional boundaries are when the staff member's child is friends with another student. In this circumstance the activity may be acceptable as long as the staff member is not alone with the student (the staff member's child or another person should be present) and the staff member's supervisor is aware of the staff member's activities.

- Being alone with an individual student out of the view of others, unless required in connection with providing educational services in accordance with your employment (e.g., health screening, counseling, therapy, nursing, personal care, and other services required by individualized education plans, or other medical condition action plans)
- Inviting or allowing individual students to visit the staff member's home.
- Visiting a student's home or meeting the student at another location outside of school for non-educational purposes
- Transporting a student in a staff member's private vehicle without permission of the principal and the parent.

Before any of the above activities occur, staff members should communicate with the appropriate administrator and obtain approval. If any of the above activities occur and are not approved, the staff member must report the occurrence to the appropriate administrator as soon as possible. Failure to report any activities could lead to the employee being subjected to Elim's progressive discipline policy.

SECTION 7: Electronic Communication

Communicating via electronic means can be a valuable way to convey information. However, caution should be exercised when staff members are communicating with students via electronic means. At all times, staff members shall abide by Elim's Acceptable Use Policy. Staff members communicating with students via electronic means must do so using Elim's network and for educational purposes only.

- Staff members shall not engage in any unacceptable behavior with students via electronic means. Staff members should also avoid any appearances of impropriety with students via electronic means.
- Staff members shall not communicate with students via a student's mobile device, whether phone, text, or instant message
- Staff members shall not communicate with students via a student's personal email account. If the student doesn't have a school address, and there is a need please work with your program administrator to secure a school-based email.
- Staff members shall not accept or initiate connections with current students on social networking sites.
- If a staff member has a social networking site for educational purposes, the staff member shall obtain permission from the principal and parents to engage with students via this site.

SECTION 8: Travel/Transportation

Consistent with Elim's Student Travel Policy, staff members are strongly discouraged from transporting a student in the staff members' private vehicle(s) under any circumstances.

However, staff members may transport a student with the written consent of both the Director of Children's Services and parent/guardian of the student. Written consent from the parent/guardian must be given in advance of the trip using the [Elim Written Consent Form for the Private Transportation of a Student](#). If the Director of Children's Services gives consent to a staff member to transport a student in a private vehicle, the Director of Children's Services must maintain a copy of the staff member's driver's license and insurance documentation. Staff members are strongly discouraged from transporting a student in the staff members' private vehicle(s) under any circumstances. However, staff members may transport a student with the written consent of both the Director of Children's Services and parent/guardian of the student. Written consent from the parent/guardian must be given in advance of the trip on the [Elim Written Consent Form for the Private Transportation of a Student](#) form. If the Director of Children's Services gives consent to a staff member to transport a student in a private vehicle, the principal must maintain a copy of the staff member's driver's license and insurance documentation.

If a staff member transports a student with permission from the parent/guardian and the Director of Children's Services, efforts should be made for an additional adult to be in the car such that the staff member is not alone with a student outside the view of others.

SECTION 9: Remote Instruction/E-Learning

During remote instruction/E-learning, Elim Christian Services remains committed to ensuring students are learning in a safe and supportive environment. Elim also understands that in order to serve students during remote instruction/E-learning, there may be times when one-on-one meetings between staff and students need to take place to facilitate learning. As our staff and students adjust to teaching and learning remotely, the standards of conduct outlined below for remote instruction/E-learning should guide staff and student interactions.

SECTION 9.1: Mandated Reporting

It is important to remind all staff that they are mandated reporters. Staff may not be able to rely on in-person signs of abuse or neglect, such as unexplained bites, burns or bruises. However, a student's physical appearance, their environment, their behavior, their emotional state and/or their lack of access to a supportive adult can indicate that they are in need of help. Remind students that they have the right to be safe, that staff are here to support them, and that they are available to speak about concerns or connect them to support.

Essential services that help ensure student safety remain open and available, including.

- The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services 24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline that can be reached at 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873) or via their new [online reporting system](#).

SECTION 9.2: One-on-One Staff/Student Contact and Meetings

The following standards apply to scheduling one-on-one staff/student contact and meetings:

- All staff/student one-on-one remote interactions must occur on the staff member's Elim purchased **Zoom account**.
- Invite the assistant principal, and the student's parents/guardians, to the meeting by adding them as optional meeting attendees.
- The purpose of any one-on-one remote meeting must be clear and unambiguous and must be clearly communicated by the staff to the student, parent/guardian, and school principal or assistant principal before the interaction begins. To clearly communicate the purpose of any one-on-one remote meeting and for proper record-keeping, it should be listed in the staff member's Elim Outlook calendar invite description.
- One-on-one meetings should be recorded to avoid any appearance of secrecy for the benefit of both the staff and the student. In order to record the session, you will need to obtain parent/guardian authorization for the recording by having them sign the Elim Video Informed Consent Form. Parent/guardian consent to record is needed during a one-on-one meeting between a staff member and student because the nature of the interaction is inherently private.
- If a parent/guardian does not give their consent to record the virtual meeting, the meeting cannot occur as a one-on-one session between a staff member and student. Instead, the school principal, assistant principal or parent/guardian must attend so that the session is no longer a meeting between one staff member and one student.
- When staff are meeting one-on-one with students using staff member's Elim purchased **Zoom account**, these standards must be followed:
- Video cameras are permitted to be turned off by students to protect privacy (staff are required to have their camera on at all times and must maintain an appropriate environment)
- If video cameras are on, the students and staff should be in an environment free from distraction.
- Everyone must be fully clothed during video meetings.
- The chat function can be used by either party to protect privacy if others are nearby.
- Images or content from remote learning must not be screen-captured or posted elsewhere without the consent of all parties (if parties are minors, consent must be obtained from a parent/guardian)
- Any disclosure or allegations made must follow proper reporting procedures.

- If a staff member finds themselves in an unplanned one-on-one meeting with a student, they must end the interaction as soon as it is safe to do so and report the occurrence to the appropriate administrator as soon as possible.

SECTION 9.3: Group Staff/Student Contact and Meetings

When adults are with students in group remote sessions or teaching synchronously in remote classrooms, the following standards apply:

- Talk about remote learning boundaries and everyone's right to safety, allowing students to provide feedback and ask questions.
- Provide feedback to students who are not following boundary guidance to model for other students, so that they are empowered to ask for boundaries to be followed. Some examples may include interrupting others who are speaking, misuse of a person's preferred pronouns, or making offensive comments during the session.
- Video cameras are permitted to be turned off by students to protect privacy (staff are required to always have their camera on and must maintain an appropriate environment)
- If video cameras are on, the students and staff should be in an environment free from distraction.
- Everyone should be fully clothed during video meetings.
- Give reminders that images or content from remote learning should not be screen-captured or posted elsewhere without the consent of all parties (if parties are minors consent must be obtained from a parent/guardian)
- The chat function can be used to chat to the entire group but should not be used privately between students.

SECTION 10: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

All school personnel are mandated reporters. A mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them in their official capacity may have been abused or neglected shall immediately contact DCFS.

The [Online Reporting System](#) is to be used for non-life threatening and non-emergency incidents of abuse or neglect of a child. **If you believe the abuse or neglect you are reporting requires immediate action, you MUST call the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at [800-25-ABUSE \(800-252-2873\)](#) to make your report.**

Call the DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline instead of using the Online Reporting System for situations including but not limited to:

- Current injuries to the child
- Immediate need for medical treatment (including a child who is suicidal)

- Sexual abuse where the involved adult has or will have access to a child within the next 24 hours.
- A child is currently afraid to go home.
- A child is currently in the protective custody of police or medical personnel.
- A child death

For additional information on this requirement, please see Elim's Reporting of Child Abuse and Child Neglect Policy.

SECTION 11: Reporting Possible or Actual Violations of These Standards

Students, parents/guardians, and staff members should notify their program administrator, the Director of Children's Services, and/or Director of Human Resources, if they believe a staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates these Standards. Prompt reporting protects all personnel.

Staff shall immediately notify their appropriate administrator, Director of Children's Services, and Human Resources if they believe that they are receiving inappropriate attention from a student, or if they have been subject to sexual advances, comments, or communications by a student. Any complaints/notifications shall be appropriately documented by the program administrator, Director of Children's Services or Director of Human Resources immediately.

The failure of a staff member to timely report conduct that violates these Standards can result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

Staff members are mandatory reporters and shall abide by the Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect and Inappropriate Relations between Adults and Students and also have an independent obligation to notify the [Illinois Department of Children and Family Services](#) (DCFS) at 800-252-2873 (1-800-25-ABUSE) if they suspect that child abuse or neglect has occurred. If the alleged victim is over the age of 18, contact the Department of Aging.

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