

ETHICS IN EDUCATION POLICY
Paideia Classical Academy
2021-2022



2370 Hammock Blvd.
Coconut Creek, FL 33063
954-974-1121
www.PaideiaClassical.org

Paideia Classical Academy
Employee Standards of Ethical Conduct
(adapted from the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida) Revised 2021-2022

A. PREAMBLE

Paideia Classical Academy (PCA) is participating in the Florida Department of Education School Choice Scholarship Program. Pursuant to the requirement set forth in the 2008 Ethics in Education Act, PCA operates under the following laws and guidelines.

Senate Bill 1712 (Ch. Law 2008-108), the Ethics in Education Act, effective July 1st, 2008. This act amends Section 1002.421, Florida Statutes, related to participating private school accountability, by adding new requirements to the employee screening process. In part, this Act created **section 1012.315, Florida Statutes**, and established that a conviction of certain offenses makes one ineligible for a Florida Educator Certificate and instructional personnel and school administrators are ineligible for employment in any position that requires direct student contact in a district school system, charter school, private school that accepts students under the Corporate Tax or McKay Scholarships, or the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind.

The private school accountability statute has also been amended to require private schools to develop standards of ethical conduct for the school's instructional personnel and administrators. Instructional personnel and school administrators are defined by Sections 1012.01(2) and (3), Florida Statutes.

Finally, the Act amends Section 1006.061, Florida Statutes, related to the state's child abuse, abandonment, and neglect policy.

B. EMPLOYEE STANDARDS AND QUALIFICATIONS

B1. Paideia Classical Academy Administration:

- 1) Requires a Level 2 criminal history report for any employee (through the VECHS fingerprinting program). Any individual convicted of an offense listed in Section 1012.315, Florida Statutes, is disqualified from employment at PCA.
- 2) Conducts an employment history check before employing instructional personnel or school administrators in any position that requires direct contact with students. This is completed by contacting the individual's previous employer and documenting the findings. If unable to contact a previous employer, the Director will document its efforts. Verification efforts and findings are documented in writing and maintained in the individual employee's file.
- 3) Screens new instructional personnel or school administrators using the two employee screening tools developed by the Department of Education.

All PCA volunteers who work with students are required to undergo the same FBI/FDLE (VECHS) background screening as hired faculty and staff.

All staff members with direct student contact will undergo background screening every (five) 5 years. Upon notification that a staff member has failed the background screening, the staff member will be immediately dismissed.

B2. Training Requirement

All PCA instructional personnel and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct. Any changes thereof will be communicated to the PCA staff within 7 (seven) days.

Section 1002.421(2)(h), Florida Statutes requires that classroom teachers at all Florida registered schools meet one of the following requirements:

- 3 or more years of public and/or private school teaching;
- Special skills, knowledge, or expertise that qualifies them to provide instruction in subjects taught;
- Baccalaureate Degree or higher

All PCA teachers fulfill or exceed these requirements.

C. REPORTING MISCONDUCT BY INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATORS

All employees and administrators have a duty to report misconduct by 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. Alleged reports of misconduct of employees should be made to Dr. Paola Weber, Director, at drweber@paideiaclassical.org. Alleged reports of misconduct of administrators should be made to the attention of PCA/AMC board of directors and mailed to 2370 Hammocks Blvd, Coconut Creek, FL 33063. Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida certified educators will be reported to the [Office of Professional Practices Services](#) at 850-245-0438. These policies and procedures for reporting misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators affecting the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted in the PCA office and published [on the PCA website](#).

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

E. 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)

F. PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

PCA values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of growth in Christ. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach in a truly Christian environment. Our school's primary professional concern will always be for the student's wholesome well-being and for the development of the student's potential, both from an educational perspective and a spiritual perspective. PCA will therefore strive for professional and spiritual growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity in Christ. Maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of other members of the community is an essential component of expressing Christian love towards one another; therefore, PCA staff will strive to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

1) Obligation towards the student requires that our instructional personnel:

- a) Shall manifest by doctrine and example the highest Christian virtue and personal decorum, behaving in a Christ-like manner at and away from PCA, as an example to all in judgment, dignity, respect, and Christian living;
- b) Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated;
- c) Shall make reasonable effort to create a school environment that is in agreement with all Christian Orthodox principles of child rearing, regarding every child as bearers of the image of Christ;

- d) Shall guide students in their pursuit of mastery of subjects taught and promote the development of a life-long love for studying;
- e) Shall guide students in the pursuit and defence of Truth; in a reasonable and age-appropriate manner, shall enable the students to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge required for independent and unbiased critical thinking;
- f) Shall speak the truth concerning educational matters in direct or indirect public expression;
- g) Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights;
- h) Shall maintain a professional, loving, Christ-like attitude and relationship at all times with all the students, refraining from familiarity and ambiguous situations or attitude;
- i) Living by the Christian tenets of the Orthodox Church, shall not harass or discriminate against any student and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
- j) Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.
- k) Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

2) Obligation to the school community requires that all PCA staff:

- a) Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated.
- 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.

3) Obligation to the profession requires that our instructional personnel:

- a) Shall report other instructional personnel's alleged violations of state or local school board rules;
- b) Shall avoid misrepresenting qualifications or assisting unqualified personnel to gain or continue employment in the profession;
- c) self-report within 48 hours to the appropriate authorities, as well as to the PCA Academic Coordinator and to the Director any circumstances that may result in a legal prohibition of continuing employment as instructional personnel.