

# Standards of Ethical Conduct

## Flowers Montessori School

1. Our school values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurturing of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards is 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 therefor strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgement 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's 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 will 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 gained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves a professional purpose or is required by law.
4. Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidences of colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the community, employees of the school must display the highest degree of ethical conduct. This commitment requires that our employees:
  - a. Shall maintain honesty in all personal dealings.
  - b. Shall not 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 deny 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 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 Requirement** All instructional personnel, educational support employees, and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct.

**Reporting Misconduct** All instructional personnel, educational support employees, and school administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel, educational support employees, 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, bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors. Reports of misconduct committed by employees and administrators should be made to the owner Bridget Kelly Fik at (352) 870-7656. 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 are posted on our website at: <http://www.flowersmontessori.com> .

**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 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 institutions 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. (F.S. 768.095)