

Code Of Conduct

A teacher's walk with the Lord is always being watched by a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12) Therefore, it is important that time is taken daily to present all aspects of the teaching day before the Lord. The scriptures forever remind us of what high standards are required of teachers.

Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct;

All employees are expected to maintain high standards in their job performance, demonstrate integrity and honesty, be considerate and cooperative, and maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students, parents/guardians, staff members, and others. The teachers will constantly give attention to knowing their subjects better and improving teaching methods. They will carry a fair share of extra assignments and a full assignment of teaching-load. They will be loyal to the administration, staff and philosophy of VCA. Teachers will encourage and uphold other staff members and follow proper channels of authority. They will assume responsibility for materials and equipment and seek help when needed before emergencies arise. Teachers will maintain a professional relationship with students, staff and parents. They will also be professional in appearance, dress and actions. They will be responsible for following the expected policies and procedures of VCA.

Professional and Appropriate Conduct (Faith's Law)

Professional and appropriate employee conduct are important Board goals that impact the quality of a safe learning environment and the school community, increasing students' ability to learn and VCA's ability to educate. To protect students from sexual misconduct by employees, and employees from the appearance of impropriety, State law also recognizes the importance for employees to constantly maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students by following established expectations and guidelines for employee-student boundaries. Many breaches of employee-student boundaries do not rise to the level of criminal behavior but do pose a potential risk to student safety and impact the quality of a safe learning environment. Repeated violations of employee-student boundaries may indicate the grooming of a student for sexual abuse. As bystanders, employees may know of concerning behaviors that no one else

is aware of, so their training on: (1) preventing, recognizing, reporting, and responding to child sexual abuse and grooming behavior; (2) this policy; and (3) federal and state reporting requirements is essential to maintaining the VCA's goal of professional and appropriate conduct. Faith's Law is the entirety of Public Act 102-676, which closed significant legal loopholes related to combating grooming by: (1) broadening the definition of grooming prohibited by the Criminal Code of 2012 (720 ILCS 5/11-25); (2) authorizing the Ill. Dept. of Children and Family Services to investigate grooming allegations under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/3); and (3) requiring the Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE) to develop and maintain a resource guide for students, parents/guardians, and teachers about sexual abuse response and prevention resources available in their community (105 ILCS 5/2-3.188). ISBE's Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource Guide (June 2023) is at: www.isbe.net/Documents/Faiths-Law-Resource-Guide.pdf. The Administrator shall identify employee conduct standards that define appropriate employee-student boundaries, provide training about them, and monitor the District's employees for violations of employee-student

boundaries. The employee conduct standards will require that, at a minimum: 1. Employees who are governed by the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators, adopted by the Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE), 2. Employees are trained on educator ethics, child abuse, grooming behaviors, and employee student boundary violations as required by law and policies. Employees maintain professional relationships with students, including maintaining employee student boundaries based upon students' ages, grade levels, and developmental levels and 45

following school-established guidelines for specific situations, including but not limited to: a. Transporting a student; b. Taking or possessing a photo or video of a student; and c. Meeting with a student or contacting a student outside the employee's professional role. Beginning 7-1-24, each board conduct inservice training on educator ethics and responding to child sexual abuse and grooming behavior including, but not limited to, teacher-student conduct, school employee-student conduct, and evidence-informed training on preventing, recognizing, reporting, and responding to child sexual abuse and grooming as outlined in 105 ILCS 5/10-23.13 (a/k/a Erin's Law) for all teachers, administrators, and school support personnel.

These expectations will be most effective when the in-service curriculum reflects local conditions and circumstances. This training is required by no later than January 31 of each year. It requires employees to complete mandated reporter training within three months of initial employment and at least every three years thereafter. 775 ILCS 5/2-109 requires districts to provide annual workplace sexual harassment prevention training to all employees. Employees report prohibited behaviors and/or boundary violations. Discipline up to and including dismissal will occur for any employee who violates an employee conduct standard or engages in any of the following: a. Violates expectations and guidelines for employee-student boundaries. b. Sexually harasses a student. c. Willfully or negligently fails to follow reporting requirements. Engages in grooming. Engages in grooming behaviors. Prohibited grooming behaviors include, at a minimum, sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct is any act, including but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, by an employee with direct contact with a student, that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Examples include, but are not limited to: A sexual or romantic invitation. Sexual harassment of a student is also prohibited. Sexual harassment of an employee is also prohibited. Grooming is defined as follows: "A person commits grooming when he or she knowingly uses a computer on-line service, Internet service, local bulletin board service, or any other device capable of electronic data storage or transmission, 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, a child's guardian, or another person believed by the person to be a child or a child's guardian, to commit any sex offense; 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. 'Child' means a person under 17 years of age." 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. All the above behaviors are reasons for immediate investigation, suspension and dismissal.

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Faiths-Law-Resource-Guide.pdf> link to Faith's Law Sexual Abuse Resource Guide.