

## **FAITH'S LAW: EMPLOYEE CONDUCT CODE**

Parkland Preparatory Academy has adopted an employee code of professional conduct in response to (105 ILCS 5/22-85.5) Sec. 22-85.5. 22-85.5- which includes addressing sexual misconduct in schools, also known as Faith's Law. Parkland Preparatory Academy agrees the success of students in school relies on safe learning environments and healthy relationships with school personnel. It is important for staff to maintain a professional relationship with students at all times and to maintain clearly defined staff-student boundaries to protect all students and staff. Doing so will contribute to a safe and ethical learning and working environment. All employees, students and parents are able to view this Employee Code of Professional Conduct at any time on our website: [www.parklandprep.com](http://www.parklandprep.com).

### **CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS SPECIFIC TO STUDENT RELATIONS**

Any type of sexual misconduct reported to Parkland Administration will be immediately investigated to the best of our abilities and include the appropriate outside government agencies; such as the local police or DCFS if warranted. Throughout this section of our policy, "*sexual misconduct*" is defined as any act, including, but not limited to, verbal, nonverbal, written, electronic communication or physical activity, by an employee of Parkland Preparatory Academy, with a student, or directed toward a student, in order to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student.

*Such acts include, but are not limited to any of the following:*

- (1) A sexual or romantic invitation or communication
- (2) Dating or soliciting a date
- (3) Engaging in sexualized or romantic communication
- (4) Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student
- (5) Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature
- (6) A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student

All staff are strictly prohibited from engaging in any of the above described acts, which is not an all encompassing list. If staff are aware of any of the above acts taking place between a staff member and student, they are required to immediately report the situation to Parkland Administration.

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All Parkland students and staff participate in an annual training titled “Erin’s Law”. The intension of our Erin’s Law Presentation (Illinois Public Act 097-1147), helps us to meet the requirement of all schools being required to provide child sexual abuse prevention education for children in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grades. The presentations are developmentally appropriate to the student age group, and staff remain with students for proper support and observations during the presentation, in the case a student has an unexpected reaction to the presentation. Parents are made aware of our Erin’s Law presentation ahead of time and do have the ability to request their child not attend.

All Parkland Preparatory Academy Staff and representatives are expected to maintain a professional relationship with students and parents. Parameters to observe in professional relationships with students and their parents include, but is not limited to:

- Act in the capacity of a professional fulfilling the roles and responsibilities outlined within one's assigned job description
- Establish and reinforce clear boundaries with all students and parents
- Strive to instill autonomy and independence in students
- Act with transparency and maintain a professional relationship with students and their parents at all times;
- Support students based on their individual developmental needs, academic needs and their social emotional capacity. If it is within the scope of your job description, also lend support to their parents in the form of providing resources that would benefit their student.
- Respect the inherent dignity, and worth of each student, and their parent by assuring 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;
- Provide a curriculum based on high expectations for each student that addresses individual differences through design, implementation, and adaptation of effective instruction; and fosters in each student the development of attributes that will enhance skills and the knowledge necessary to be a contributing member of society
- Assume responsibility and accountability for their performance and continually strive to demonstrate proficiency and currency in both content knowledge and professional practice;

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- Develop and implement professional goals with attention to professional standards through a process of self assessment and professional development;
- Represent professional credentials and qualifications accurately; and demonstrate a high level of professional judgment.

Employees or representatives of Parkland will report any interaction with students that fall outside of the above guidelines directly to Administration, in order to ensure no one is at risk of harm or abuse. All Parkland representatives and employees are also mandated reporters.

Parkland identifies the following expectations for how all employees will maintain a professional relationship with students, including the expectations for staff-student boundaries, recognizing the age and developmental level of the students served, and establishes guidelines for the following situations:

(A) **Transporting a student-** Parkland does not provide transportation unless it is for a class sponsored field trip. In the event of a field trip, students will be escorted onto transportation in the same student to staff ratio that is maintained on campus in classrooms. In the rare case one student would need to be transported, and PPA staff were expected to transport the student to an identified event, PPA would ensure two PPA staff members are present; one to drive and one to observe the student.

(B) **Photography/Videos-** Taking or possessing a photo, or a video of a student on a personal device is not permitted. Parkland issued technology may be used to take pictures of students at school events if their parents have granted permission within their registration packet. These photos taken on company issued technology may never be disseminated for personal use, and may only be used in company sponsored communications approved by the site Administrator.

(C) **Meetings-** Meeting with a student, or contacting a student in any format outside of the employee's professional role is strictly forbidden. If there is a specific exception that staff feel needs to be proposed in the best interest of the child, they may petition the Managing Director regarding attending said event.

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Parkland Preparatory Academy also upholds and expects all employees to meet the Illinois Educator Code of Ethics. Below are all Principles relates to the Educator Code of Ethics in which PPA employees are expected to adhere to:

### **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;

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- 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 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.

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**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.

Parkland has the ability to know if any of its educators have violated professional staff–student boundaries in previous employment roles by referencing the state’s do not hire list posted by ISBE, referencing the database for registered sex offenders, and running state and federal background checks on all employees prior to the candidate assuming their role, to ensure all students and staff are not placed in unnecessary situations where they could potentially become victims. (Source: P.A. 102-676, eff. 12-3-21.)

Many breaches of staff-student boundaries never rise to the level of criminal behavior, but do pose a risk to student safety. Parkland believes that any breach of staff-student boundaries should be directly reported to, and addressed by Administration, who will then handle accordingly. This may include involving additional outside agencies such as the local police department, DCFS or both. Repeated violations of staff–student boundaries can indicate the grooming of a student for sexual abuse, thus why any breach of boundaries will be addressed by Administration.

***Remediating Misconduct***

Disciplinary action at PPA is intended to fairly and impartially correct behavior and performance problems early on and prevent reoccurrence. Disciplinary action may involve any of the following: verbal warning, written warning, suspension with or without pay, and termination of employment, depending on the severity of the problem and the frequency of occurrence. If necessary outside agencies such as local law enforcement or DCFS may be involved. PPA reserves the right to administer discipline at its discretion. Disciplinary actions are based upon legal expectations set forth within Illinois School Code, company policy and based on breaches of the State Board of Education’s Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators.

Any staff violation may result in disciplinary action up to, and including dismissal from employment. As bystanders, educators may have knowledge of concerning behaviors that no one else is aware of, so they will be provided with adequate annual training on sexual abuse based on the Employee Code of Professional Conduct, and Federal and State reporting requirements. Failure to report a violation of the Employee Code of Professional Conduct may

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subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment. All employees of Parkland Preparatory Academy are also mandated reporters.

All Educators:

- Are responsible for providing accurate communication to the Illinois State Board of Education concerning all certification matters in relation to what is required to maintain the credentials for the role in which they are employed;
- Maintain appropriate certification for employment; and
- Comply with state and federal codes, laws, and regulations.

(105 ILCS 5/22-85.5) Sec. 22-85.5. 22-85.5. Sexual misconduct in schools. This Section applies beginning on July 1, 2022.

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