



PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE & ETHICAL CONDUCT

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

1. We are empathetic and compassionate people who place the needs and concerns of our students first, viewing every interaction as an opportunity to demonstrate care and concern.
2. We are educational engineers who foster and maintain positive and supportive learning environments that empower students to grow and gain confidence.
3. We are adept planners who design learning opportunities that promote discovery, interaction, application, critical thinking, leadership, and life-management skills.
4. We are holistic practitioners who capitalize on teachable moments, recognize each student as an individual, and are mindful of their familial, social, and academic challenges.
5. We are life-long learners who inspire our students with our enthusiasm for discovery and self-improvement, we adapt our lessons to accommodate multiple intelligences, and integrate new practices, methodologies, research, and technology.
6. We are role models of integrity and honesty who uphold strong moral principles representing the school with honor and goodwill.
7. We are humble stewards of the academic community who partner and collaborate with colleagues and administrators to represent the mission of the school.
8. We are effective communicators who know how to listen and relate successfully to students, parents, and colleagues, understanding the importance of timely and clear communication.

PROFESSIONAL PRINCIPLES

Oak Hall School values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all. Oak Hall School's primary concern is the student and the development of the student's potential. Oak Hall School employees will therefore

PROFESSIONAL PRINCIPLES (CONT.)

strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity. *Concern for the student requires that every Oak Hall School employee:*

- Shall make a 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.
- Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
- Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
- Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
- Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
- 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, disabling condition, sexual orientation or gender identity, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from such harassment or discrimination.
- Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
- Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves an approved professional purpose or as required by law.

TRAINING REQUIREMENT

All Oak Hall School Instructional Personnel, educational support employees, and Administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct.



ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the community, employees of Oak Hall School must display the highest degree of ethical conduct. *This commitment requires that our employees:*

- Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
- Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, disabling condition if otherwise qualified, sexual orientation or gender identity, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.
- Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
- 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.
- Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.
- Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgments of colleagues.
- Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications, achievements, or accomplishments.
- Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.
- Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of the School or other organization with which the individual is affiliated.
- Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning any educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.

ETHICAL COMMUNICATION

All Oak Hall School employees must abide by a code of wholly ethical communications with peers, supervisors, employees, vendors, and membership. Ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and for others. *As such, the following rules should be expressly followed to avoid violating such code:*

- Communicate any and all concerns, except those regarding harassment or discrimination, regarding another's behavior directly with the individual. Sharing such concerns with others that do not have a legitimate reason to know such concerns may quickly amount to gossip – one of the most damaging practices in any workplace.
- Avoid argumentative tones and comments. Employees should state their position clearly and factually in a normal tone, allowing the other individual an opportunity to share her or his position, and inviting open discussion regarding both such positions.
- Honesty is always the best procedure. It is critical that employees never engage in deceit, exaggeration, or express dishonesty when dealing with other individuals. While some communication may be extremely difficult to have, employees are always expected to provide them in a candid, but respectful, manner.
- Respect issues of confidentiality. Employees of Oak Hall School will be faced with topics of great confidentiality at times and, as such, must avoid sharing any such information with anyone not intended to be part of such confidentiality.



ADHERENCE TO PRINCIPLES

Oak Hall School will consider violations of these principles on a case-by-case basis and will respond to such violations based on two fundamental principles:

1. Oak Hall School expects a high level of personal responsibility from its employees as members of the School community. All members of the School community should be able to assume that they belong and contribute to a community in which members share a personal commitment to these Principles of Professional Conduct.
2. Membership in the Oak Hall community is a privilege, not a right. Unwillingness or incapacity to meet the above expectations is reason to evaluate the appropriateness of one's membership in the community.

Any employee found violating or failing to comply with any of these procedures may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

REPORTING MISCONDUCT

All Employees have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to, obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors.

- Reports of misconduct of employees should be made to your Division Director/Supervisor or the Director of Human Resources (krowe@oakhall.org).
- Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to the Director of Human Resources (krowe@oakhall.org).

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 by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted in this Employee Handbook, on posters in each Division office, and on the School's website (www.oakhall.org).

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE, ABANDONMENT, OR NEGLECT

Under Florida law, employees and agents of the School 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/>. If you have questions or concerns about any information you have observed, please contact the appropriate division director to discuss those questions or concerns.

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNS

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 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

You are protected from making a good faith report of abuse, even if mistaken. 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. (Fla. Stat. 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)