

The Learning House
**Employee Code of Professional Conduct/
Misconduct, Abuse & Molestation
Prevention Policy**

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Illinois Educator Code of Ethics

Preamble

Educators fundamentally believe that meeting the educational needs of each student is critical to the profession. The Illinois Educators' Code of Ethics is a set of core principles, values, and responsibilities that sets expectations to guide practice and inspire professional excellence in relation to federal, state, and local policies, rules, regulations, and collective bargaining agreements. Illinois educators encourage the application of these core principles throughout the education community.

Definition of Educator

An educator is a person who:

- holds or is applying for a valid Illinois Professional Educator License endorsed in a teaching, school support personnel or administrative field issued pursuant to Article 21B of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/Art. 21B];
- is not required to hold a Professional Educator License or an educator license with stipulations but who holds or is applying for approval (e.g., certain paraprofessionals and educational interpreters) for their positions issued pursuant to requirements set forth in 23 Illinois Administration Code 25; and

- is enrolled in an Illinois educator preparation program.

Principles

The Illinois Educator Code of Ethics contains five core principles which provide a foundation for the responsibilities and commitments of Illinois Educators:

1. Responsibility to Students
2. Responsibility to Self
3. Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession
4. Responsibility to Parents, Families and Communities
5. Responsibility to the Illinois State Board of Education

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;
- 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:

- 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.

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. Illinois Educators:

- Provide accurate communication to the Illinois State Board of Education concerning all certification matters;
- Maintain appropriate certification for employment; and
- Comply with state and federal codes, laws, and regulations.

Definitions of Types of Abuse and Misconduct

Physical abuse occurs when a student is purposefully physically injured or put at risk of harm by an adult.

Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a student and an adult. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the student.

Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a student that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's growth, development, or psychological functioning.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a student's basic needs or the failure to protect a student from harm.

Sexual misconduct is any act, including, but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, by an employee or agent of the school with direct contact with a student that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Such an act includes, but is not limited to: a sexual or romantic invitation; 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; and/or sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student.

Identification of Appropriate and Inappropriate Interactions between Staff and Students

Type of Interaction	Appropriate	Inappropriate
<p><u>Physical Contact:</u> The Learning House’s physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting students and staff. The Learning House encourages appropriate physical contact with students and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by staff towards students in the organization’s programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pats on the shoulder or back ○ Handshakes, high-fives, and hand slapping ○ Touching hands, shoulders, and arms (when appropriate and after getting consent) ○ During safety situations that require physical interventions (Refer to the Behavioral Policy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kissing ○ Showing affection in isolated area ○ Lap sitting ○ Wrestling ○ Piggyback rides ○ Tickling ○ Allowing a student to cling to an employee or volunteer ○ Any type of massage given by or to a student ○ Any form of affection that is unwanted by the student or the staff or volunteer development

<p><u>Verbal interactions:</u> Staff and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to students in a way that is, or could be construed by most observers as coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Staff and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with students. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with students.</p> <p>Type of Interaction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Verbal Praise ○ Positive reinforcement ○ Appropriate jokes ○ Encouragement <p>Appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compliments relating to physique or body ○ Name-calling ○ Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving students in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers Secrets ○ Cursing ○ Off-color or sexual jokes ○ Shaming ○ Belittling ○ Derogatory remarks of any kind ○ Harsh language that may threaten or humiliate students <p>Inappropriate</p>
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<p><u>One-on-One Interactions:</u> Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a student. The Learning House aims to eliminate or reduce these situations. In those situations where one-on-one interactions are not able to be avoided, staff and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of misconduct, abuse or false allegations of misconduct or abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When meeting one-on-one with a student try to do so in a public place where you are in full view of others or in view of the cameras. ○ Avoid any physical affection that can be misinterpreted (pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes). ○ If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by. ○ If transporting a student and there are no other students in the vehicle, have the student sit in the back seat as opposed to the front passenger seat. ○ Inform other staff and volunteers that you are alone with a student and ask them to randomly drop in. ○ Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No staff other than therapists should meet one-on-one with a student in any office with the door closed. ○ Meeting with a student in a non-meeting area (i.e., closet, store room, bathroom) with the door closed. ○ Interacting with a student who is backed against a wall. ○ Taking an undue interest in the student (special friendship or relationship). ○ Engaging in peer-like behavior with the student. ○ Giving rides in personal vehicle with or without permission. ○ Extending contact with student beyond the school day for personal purposes. ○ Taking student on outings not related to school purposes and away from protective adults. ○ Isolating student in a secluded place.
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<p><u>Off Site Contact:</u> Abuse can occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities. This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put staff, volunteers, and The Learning House at increased risk. Meeting or contacting students outside of a staff's professional role will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Taking groups of students on an outing with written parental approval, including a "release of liability waiver." ○ Attending sporting activities with groups of students ○ Attending functions at a student's home with parents/guardians present ○ Students should only be transported in a school-owned van. ○ When transporting students of different genders, students must sit in different rows and must not sit next to each other in the same row. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Taking one student on an outing without the parents'/guardians' written permission. ○ Visiting one student in the student's home, without a parent/guardian present. ○ Entertaining one student in the home of staff or volunteers. ○ A lone student spending the night with staff or volunteers. ○ When transporting students, no stopping for food, etc on the way into school or on the way home.
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<p><u>Electronic Communication/ Social Media:</u> Any private electronic communication between staff and students, including the use of social networking websites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, instant messaging, etc.) is prohibited. All communication between staff and students must be transparent, it must be executed on school-approved platforms, and it must relate to The Learning House.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sending and replying to emails and text messages from students ONLY in regards to school or program matters using school issued technology/emails/ Phones. ○ Taking pictures or videos of students must only be done with the students' express permission with school-issued cell phones or cameras and may not be shared with others individually or on the school website without <p style="text-align: center;">the express written permission of parents/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments in any hard copy or electronic communication ○ Sexually-oriented conversations ○ Private messages between staff and volunteers with students ○ Posting pictures of organization participants on social media sites ○ Posting inappropriate comments on pictures ○ "Friending" participants on social
<p><u>Gift Giving:</u> Molesters routinely groom students by giving gifts, thereby endearing themselves to the student. They might instruct the student to keep the gifts a secret, which then starts teaching the student to keep secrets from parents/ guardians. For this reason, staff and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of students, and only under the following circumstances:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administration, parents, or guardians should be made aware of and approve the gift. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gifts that are given without the knowledge of administration, parents, or guardians.

Warning Signs to Assist in Identifying Potential Abuse and Misconduct

It is important that we understand the warning signs of potential abuse. This policy includes some general guidance as well as specific things to look for in children for the different types of abuse. The existence of one sign or even the prolonged existence of one sign does not necessarily prove the existence of abuse and may be related to other factors. While we must be on the lookout for potential signs of abuse, we must also proceed with caution in concluding that abuse is present based only on these signs.

Things to look for in children:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home
- Poor hygiene

- Lack of clothing to meet physical needs
- Hiding food home to eat later
- Taking food or money without permission
- Poor attendance or a drastic difference in attendance

Physical Abuse

Things to look for in children:

- Burns
- Bites
- Bruises
- Welts
- Lacerations or Cuts
- Broken bones
- Black eyes
- Hair loss
- Fading bruises or other marks
- Seems frightened of parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Seems always watchful or on alert for something bad to happen
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Injuries appear to have a pattern (as from a foreign object)
- Uncommon location for injuries (e.g., underarms, neck, back, stomach, thighs)
- Shies away from touch
- Flinches at sudden movement
- Appears afraid to go home
- Wears inappropriate clothing (e.g., a coat on a warm day) to cover up bruises
- Recurring injuries with inconsistent, implausible or guarded explanations
- Hesitation regarding showing certain body parts
- Acts out aggression on others
- Fear
- Withdrawal
- Depression

- Has fantasies, artwork or threats of violence
- Regression
- Nightmares
- Insomnia

Emotional Abuse

Things to look for in children:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- Is inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example)
- Is inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example)
- Excessively withdrawn, fearful or anxious about doing something wrong
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Has attempted suicide
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent
- Doesn't seem to be attached to caregiver
- Dramatic changes in behavior
- Unusual fears for the child's age
- Inability to react with emotion
- Inability to develop emotional bonds with others
- Hides eyes
- Lowered gaze
- Biting lips or tongue
- Forcing a smile
- Fidgeting
- Annoyance
- Defensiveness
- Exaggeration
- Confusion or denial
- Feeling of nakedness, defeat, alienation or lack of worth
- Regression
- Poor self-esteem
- Angry acts

- Withdrawal
- Insecurity
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Depression
- Difficulty in relationships
- Eating disorders
- Sleep disorders/nightmares
- Speech disorders
- Developmental delays
- Nervous disorders or somatic symptoms

Sexual Abuse

Things to look for in children:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refuses to participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Makes a strong effort to avoid a specific person without an obvious reason
- Compulsive masturbation and teaching others to masturbate
- Excessive curiosity about sex or sexuality
- Stained, torn or bloody underclothing
- Frequent, unexplained, sore throats, yeast or urinary tract infections
- Bed wetting
- Soiling pants
- Playing with feces
- Complaints of pain or itching in genitalia
- Excessive bathing
- Withdrawn or aggressive

- Sexual inference in artwork
- Overly compulsive behavior
- Fears and phobias
- Sleep problems
- Fire starting
- Somatic symptoms (e.g., stomach aches, headaches, etc.)

Neglect

For purposes of signs of neglect, we have not endeavored to break them down by type of neglect. Recognizing the particular type of neglect is not nearly as important as knowing the signs of neglect themselves.

Things to look for in children:

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Is frequently unsupervised, left alone or allowed to play in unsafe conditions
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care
- Poor hygiene including lice, scabies, severe or untreated diaper rash, bed sores
- Squinting
- Untreated injury or illness
- Lack of immunizations
- Indicators of prolonged exposure to the elements (sunburn, insect bites, etc.)
- Height and weight significantly below age level

Investigating and Reporting Abuse

The Learning House staff are mandated reporters under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act [325 ILCS 5/4]. They must sign acknowledgement of their mandated reporter status at hire, requiring them to report or cause a report to be made to the Child Abuse Hotline (800-252-2873) whenever they have reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be abused or neglected. If they willfully fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect, they may be found guilty of a Class A misdemeanor and may have their professional licenses suspended or revoked.

The Learning House will take all allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct seriously and will promptly, thoroughly, and equitably investigate whether misconduct has taken place. All allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct should be reported by way of mail, email, or phone directly to:

Mark Fisher, Executive Director

The Learning House

5110 Capitol Drive

Wheeling, Illinois 60090

847-459-8330

markf@thelearninghouse.net

The Learning House may utilize an outside third party to conduct an investigation of misconduct. The Learning House will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services agencies. The Learning House will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation. The Learning House is committed to following the state and federal legal requirements for reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and child or adult protective services organizations.

References:

Manual for Mandated Reporters: https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/safekids/reporting/Documents/cfs_1050-21_mandated_reporter_manual.pdf

Police: 9-1-1

Employee Requirements, Training and Education at The Learning House

Requirements

At hire, all employees are informed of the school's policies and procedures, including, but not limited to, an explanation of what constitutes sexual harassment; the duty of the staff to report allegations of sexual harassment; disciplinary sanctions related to findings of violations; and the school's policy prohibiting retaliation and intimidation. All staff are provided the level of training needed to identify and take action to redress sexual misconduct and properly report incidents of sexual misconduct by students or employees to The Learning House administrator.

- Every employee must have a clear criminal background check before starting employment at The Learning House.

- Every employee must read and agree to The Learning House Crisis Intervention Policy.
- Every employee must read and agree to The Learning House Behavior Intervention Policy.
- Every employee must read and agree to The Learning House Bullying Prevention Policy.
- Every employee must read and agree to The Learning House Sexual Harassment Policy.
- Every employee must read and agree to The Learning House Privacy/Dignity Policy.
- Every employee must read and agree to The Learning House Health and Safety Requirements.
- Every employee must acknowledge that by working for The Learning House, he/she is a mandated reporter.
- Every employee must read and agree to The Learning House Employee Code of Professional Conduct/Misconduct, Abuse and Molestation Prevention Policy.

Training and Professional Development

All employees are minimally required to participate in the following mandated training provided by The Learning House:

- Child Abuse and Neglect – mandated reporter training must be completed within three months of the date of employment and at least every three years thereafter.
- Expecting/Parenting Youth, Domestic and Sexual Violence – minimally every two years
- Sexual Harassment and Discrimination – annually
- Educator Ethics – minimally every two years

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE EMPLOYEE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT/ MISCONDUCT, ABUSE AND MOLESTATION PREVENTION POLICY

I acknowledge that I have received and understand the Employee Code of Professional Conduct/Misconduct, Abuse and Molestation Prevention Policy. I understand that The Learning

House will not tolerate any employee, board member, volunteer, staff member or third party who violates the Misconduct, Abuse and Molestation Policy. Disciplinary action will be taken against those who are found to have violated the Misconduct, Abuse and Molestation Policy. I understand: (1) that it is my responsibility to abide by all rules contained in this policy; (2) how to report incidents of abuse or molestation as set forth in this policy; (3) that I shall not retaliate against any employee/volunteer or other exercising his or her rights under this policy; (4) that I shall not make false and/or malicious allegations, or deliberately provide false information during an investigation; and (5) that violation of this policy can lead to disciplinary action by The Learning House, up to and including termination of employment.

Employee/Volunteer

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Administrative Witness

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____