



*The Broach School of Jacksonville, Inc.*

## **Ethics in Education Policy**

Revised 7/27/23

## Code of Ethics

- A. Purpose:** The Broach School of Jacksonville operates on the principle that all employees are part of a team, working towards the goal of maintaining a respectful, efficient, and effective operation that focuses on providing excellent education in a structured and encouraging environment. Effective employee relationships result from maintaining the highest possible ethical standards and using open, respectful, direct communications between the administration and staff members.
- B. Employee Standards of Ethical Conduct.** In addition to the principles outlined in the Employee Handbook, the Broach School of Jacksonville has established the following ethical values which all company personnel are expected to accept and support. Employees will:
1. Value 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 teach.
  2. Value and assure equal opportunity of all individuals, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or any other discriminatory factor.
  3. Make the student and the development of the student's potential their primary professional concern.
  4. Strive for professional growth and seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.
  5. Strive to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct as a concerted effort to maintain the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, students, parents, and other members of the community.
  6. Report any alleged employee, educational support personnel or school administrator misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student.

## Employee Relationships with Students

- A. General Policy:** The Broach School of Jacksonville requires employee interactions with students, former students, fellow colleagues, and student's families be conducted in a professional manner. Guidelines for such interaction are listed below.
- B. Respectful Treatment:** Employees are expected to interact with students in a respectful and compassionate manner, always protecting against any violation of their rights. Any breach of the principles outlined below will result in disciplinary action, up to and

including termination. The School's commitment to respectful treatment of our students requires that employees:

1. Shall use a quiet and respectful manner with interacting with students;
2. Shall use no profane, demeaning, indecent, ethnic, or other discriminatory connotation directed toward any student;
3. 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;
4. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning;
5. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view;
6. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program;
7. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement;
8. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights;
9. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination;
10. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage;
11. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law;
12. Shall not use any form of corporal punishment or physical or educational exercise as punishment.

**C. Respect of Colleagues:** Employees will be aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the community. Employees of our school must display the highest degree of ethical conduct. This commitment requires that our employees:

1. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
2. Shall not, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, physical condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.

3. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
4. 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.
5. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

**D. Contact with Student's Families and Close Associates:** Employee association with students, their family members, or close associates shall be limited to persons with whom the employee was acquainted or associated with on a personal level prior to the student's entry into the School. Should an employee be associated with a student, they must immediately state this to their Campus Director or relevant supervisor upon the student's entry into the School.

**E. Additionally, staff will not engage in the following activities:**

1. Different or preferential treatment towards one student, or group of students, over another;
2. Giving gifts or money (including loaning money), favors or services to any one student, or a group of students, (beyond those required by the School);
3. Acceptance for themselves or any family member of any personal, (tangible or non-tangible) gift, favor or service, unless part of a specific program or school activity approved by the Campus Director.
4. Entrance into any business relationship with a student or student's relative;
5. **Contact outside the School/program other than incidental contact. Staff should not give students their personal phone number, cell number, or social media contacts. This is subject to grounds for immediate termination of employment.**
6. Giving students rides in personal vehicles not related to school functions, on personal time, or without school permission.

**F. Contact with Former Students.** Employee contact with former students, their families, or close associates shall be of a professional nature. Close personal contacts shall be limited to those persons with whom the employee was acquainted or associated prior to the student's entry into the school.

## Compliance and Duty to Report

- A. Purpose:** To establish policy and procedures for mandatory reporting of actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect and for reporting all employee, including educational support employees and administrators, misconduct which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student.
- B. Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect:** In compliance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), each state has passed some form of mandatory child abuse reporting regulations. The Broach School of Jacksonville recognizes its ethical obligation in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect and its obligation to comply with state law.

All employees are considered mandated reporters. Therefore, when an occurrence has been reported to any staff member or there is reasonable cause to suspect a child has been abused and/or neglected or threatened with abuse, staff members should contact their respective Campus Director in order to jointly report to state child protection officers in accordance with their state law, regarding the reporting of such incidents. All information gathered by the various state or local agencies is confidential. Following are signs of abuse that may warrant reporting:

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.

**C. How to Report:** All states require the report be made to some type of law enforcement authority or child protection agency.

1. Consult the Child Abuse Notice posted in your facility for the applicable telephone number and/or website for your location.
2. **1-800-96-ABUSE or <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>**
3. After a report has been made to the appropriate agency, complete a Child Abuse/Neglect Report and place it in a sealed envelope and forward to the Central Office.

**D. Immunity from Liability:** 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. (F.S. 39.203) In addition, the School prohibits any act of reprisal or discharge against any employee who reports actual or suspected child abuse in good faith.

However, any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false report or counsels another to make a false report is guilty of a crime punishable by imprisonment and potential significant fines. A false report is a report of child abuse, neglect or abandonment that is not true and is maliciously made for the purpose of:

1. Harassing, embarrassing, or harming another person,
2. Personal financial gain for the reporting person;
3. Acquiring custody of a child; or
4. Personal benefit for the reporting person in any other private dispute involving a child.

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)

If clarification is needed on this policy, contact the Central Office.

**E. Reporting Misconduct by Instructional Personnel and Administrators:** All employees, educational support employees, and administrators have an obligation to report any

misconduct by instructional personnel and administrators, which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Behaviors that may be indicative of misconduct include:

1. Being alone with a student in a dark or closed room or secluded area;
2. Behaving in an overly friendly or familiar way or failing to maintain an appropriate professional boundary with a student;
3. Using forceful or unnecessary physical contact with a student;
4. Administering discipline not compliant with School policy;
5. Accepting or offering gifts/favors for return of a favor or privilege from students or colleagues;
6. Badgering or habitually teasing a student;
7. Mocking or belittling a student;
8. Physical aggression toward a student;
9. Chronically embarrassing a student;
10. Displaying prejudice or bigotry against a student;
11. Suspicion of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
12. Failing to properly supervise students or to ensure student safety;
13. Cheating, falsifying information or testing violations;
14. Retaliating against a student or colleague for reporting misconduct;
15. Directing or using profane, offensive, or explosive language in the presence of students;
16. Making lewd or suggestive comments or overtures toward a student or colleague;
17. Sexual innuendo

**F. How to Report:** Employees, who are aware of or observe misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student, have a duty to report such behavior immediately. The reporting process is further defined as follows:

1. Allegations or suspicions of misconduct by any classroom or other school personnel must be reported to the School Campus Director. See below for your location:
  - a) Orange Park – Sonya Sutter, [ssutter@broachscool.com](mailto:ssutter@broachscool.com)
  - b) Ponte Vedra – Cheri Lepore, [clepore@broachscool.com](mailto:clepore@broachscool.com)
  - c) Free 2 Be Me – Sherri Henderson, [sherrih@hendershaven.org](mailto:sherrih@hendershaven.org)
  - d) South – Sharon Soder, [ssoder@broachscool.com](mailto:ssoder@broachscool.com)
  - e) West – Chrissy Heffner, [cheffner@broachscool.com](mailto:cheffner@broachscool.com)

2. Allegations or suspicions of misconduct by administrative personnel must be reported to Kathy Foster, President at the Central Office. She can be reached via email at [kfoster@broachschool.com](mailto:kfoster@broachschool.com) or at 904-637-0300, ext. 102.
  3. The School Campus Director/Central Office will conduct a full investigation and take appropriate disciplinary action where warranted. Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services. Policies and procedures for reporting any misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety or welfare of a student are posted in staff restrooms and in teacher lounges near the copier on campuses.
  4. 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 our teacher lounges near the copiers and on our website, [www.broachschool.com](http://www.broachschool.com) , at <https://broachschool.com/school-information/#compliance-id>.
- G. Failure to Report:** Employees who fail to report misconduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- H. Training Requirement:** All instructional personnel, administrators and educational support employees are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct.

### **Termination of Employment**

- A. General Policy. Florida is an *employment at will state*.**  
The Broach School of Jacksonville may terminate an employment relationship because of an employee's resignation, discharge, retirement, or reduction in force. Employees shall be free to resign at any time and for any reason and the company shall reserve the right to terminate employment at any time for any reason not prohibited by law.
- B. Voluntary Termination.** A voluntary termination or resignation shall occur when the separation is initiated by the employee. Employees who resign are expected to give an appropriate amount of notice and maintain the terms of their **Employee Agreement**.
- C. Involuntary Termination.** An involuntary termination shall occur when the separation is initiated by the School. **The School prohibits confidentiality agreements with employees who are dismissed, terminated, or resign in lieu of termination due to misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student.**



**D. Employees Terminating Employment for any reason shall be given an exit interview to:**

1. Review the employee's benefits and terms of the **Employee Agreement** made with the School as they relate to the employee's terminated status;
2. Collect all company property including identification badge, keys, technology, phone, manuals, educational materials including resources etc. from the employee; and
3. If the employee is in a teaching position requiring classroom documentation, classroom records including lesson plans, teacher's textbooks, and grade books should be left for review by the Campus Director ensuring there are no deficiencies.

**E. Separation Notice.** Where required by law, the School accounting office will provide notice of separation to the applicable state agency.

**F. Final Pay.** After all School property has been turned in, the final pay for terminating employees will be available on the next regular payday. Final checks will only be issued as "live" checks and will not be direct deposited. The terminating employee's final check will be mailed to his/her last known address or as the address provided on the termination form or may be picked up in person at the Central Office.

**G. Disclosure:** 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)

**H. Notices:** This document is published on our website at [www.broachschoo.com](http://www.broachschoo.com) by clicking on this link, <https://broachschoo.com/school-information/#compliance-id>.