



## **Lions' Mathematics & Science Christian Academy**

### **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT POLICY**

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#### **Mandated Reporter of Abuse and Neglect**

All Lions Mathematics & Science Christian Academy (LMSCA) employees are mandated reporters under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act [325 ILCS 5/4]. Employees are required under the law to report or cause a report to be made to the child abuse Hotline number (1-800-252-2873) whenever they have reasonable cause to believe that a child in their professional care may be abused or neglected. Employees must complete training and sign the Mandated Reporter form, provided by LMSCA upon joining the organization. The terms of the mandated reporter form are valid during the entire tenure of employment with LMSCA.

#### **Definition of Sexual Misconduct**

Section 22-85.5(c) defines "sexual misconduct" as:

1. 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 district, charter school or nonpublic 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, any of the following:

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

### **Reporting and Documenting Reasonable Suspicions of Child Abuse, Child Neglect, Sexual Misconduct, Grooming or Inappropriately Intimate Relationships Involving Students and Staff**

1. A mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that a child known to the reporter in the reporter's official capacity may have been abused or neglected is required to immediately call the DCFS Hotline at 1-800-252-2873 (1-800-25-ABUSE). Mandated reporters must also report to DCFS any sexual misconduct by an adult against a student as well as any interactions or behaviors which suggest that an adult has or had an inappropriately intimate relationship with a child or may be grooming a child, even if the employee does not have reasonable suspicion that sex abuse is occurring or has occurred. NOTE: A mandated reporter's legal obligation is not satisfied by notifying the reporter's Director/or the reporter's supervisor of the reporter's suspicion.
2. After notifying the Hotline, a mandated reporter must inform the Academy's Director/or the reporter's supervisor of the report. If the alleged abuser is the mandated reporter's Director/supervisor, or the mandated reporter fears retaliation from their director/supervisor, the mandated reporter must notify the president of the Academy's Executive Board of Directors. An anonymous report to DCFS does not satisfy a mandated reporter's obligations under this policy.
3. When the mandated reporter notifies the Director/or the reporter's supervisor that the mandated reporter has called the Hotline to report suspected abuse or neglect, the Director/supervisor must complete an Incident Report form in ISBE CICS' electronic incident-reporting system.
4. Within 48 hours after making a DCFS Hotline call, the mandated reporter or the Director/or the reporter's supervisor must send written confirmation to the

appropriate DCFS field office and upload a copy of the written confirmation into CICS' electronic incident-reporting system

5. A mandated reporter must not notify a parent, guardian, family or household member of allegations or investigations of suspected child abuse or neglect by a parent, guardian, family or household member. Notification will be handled by DCFS or the police.
6. A mandated reporter must preserve confidentiality by discussing the reporter's suspicions only with the alleged victim; the mandated reporter's supervisor; the school nurse or social worker; district investigators; any employee of DCFS, the Chicago Police Department or the State's Attorney's Office; and the child's court appointed attorney or guardian ad litem.
7. A mandated reporter shall cooperate fully with investigators from the DCFS Division of Child Protection (DCP). Any employee subpoenaed to testify in any court or administrative proceeding shall notify the employee's supervisor of the subpoena.
8. For further information, visit the Illinois Sexual Abuse Response & Prevention Guide: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Faiths-Law-Resource-Guide.pdf>

## **Communication with Students and Parents**

### **Standards of Conduct for Maintaining Professional Boundaries between Staff and Students**

The Standards apply to all LMSCA employees, volunteers, vendors, consultants and their employees, and other third-parties who interact with students (hereinafter "staff" or "staff members").

For staff members whose children are students of LMSCA or who have family members who attend LMSCA, these Standards do not apply to the usual parent/child or familial relationship.

#### **General Standards**

The following general standards apply to all LMSCA staff/student interactions.

- Personal contact between students and staff members must always be appropriate to the circumstances, non-sexual and unambiguous in meaning.
- Staff members shall maintain a strictly professional relationship with students, whether on or off school property and during or outside of school hours.

- Staff members are responsible for maintaining professional and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with students at all times. A staff member must never be alone with a student at any time.
- Interactions between staff members and students should be based on mutual respect and trust.
- Staff members are responsible for treating all students consistently and in line with the educational mission of LMSCA.

### **Unacceptable Behavior**

The following behaviors are unacceptable and therefore strictly prohibited. Each behavior is an example of the inappropriate and prohibited crossing of a boundary and violation of the professional role of a LMSCA staff member. This list is not exhaustive.

- Staff members shall not target a particular student or students for personal attention or friendship. Gossiping with or about other students or staff and confiding in students beyond the normal staff member-student relationship is prohibited.
- Staff members shall not ask a student to keep a secret, promise to keep a student's secret or coerce a student to confide their personal or family problems. This example does not apply when counseling staff are meeting with students. If a student initiates a discussion of their personal or family problems, staff members are expected to be supportive and to refer the student to the counseling staff member, if appropriate. LMSCA Standards of Conduct for Maintaining Professional Boundaries between Staff and Students
- Staff members shall not engage in sexual, racial or religious banter, jokes or innuendoes with students. Discriminatory and/or banter that marginalizes a student or groups of students is strictly prohibited. This applies to one's actual or perceived membership in one or more of the Protected Categories (such as actual or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation).
- Staff members shall not show inappropriate images, including pornography, violence or explicit language to students.
- Staff members shall not engage in, discuss or plan future romantic or sexual relationships with students.
- Staff members shall not make sexual advances towards students or flirt with students.

- Staff members shall not engage with a student’s flirting or sexual overtures. Any incidents of a student flirting with a staff member or making sexual overtures towards a staff member must be reported pursuant to the section “Reporting Possible or Actual Violations of These Professional Standards.”
- Staff members shall not provide or offer to provide alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or paraphernalia to students.
- Staff members shall not single out any one student and provide the student with gift(s) or accept expensive or numerous gifts from students. Nominal gifts to multiple students/classrooms are permissible. Nominal gifts to teachers as a form of appreciation are acceptable.
- Staff members shall not address students with unique pet names or personalized terms of endearment that suggest a unique and overly familiar relationship. Staff members shall not allow students to address them by their first name alone, nickname, pet names or personalized terms of endearment that suggest an overly familiar relationship.
- Staff members shall not comment on a student’s physical appearance.
- Staff members shall not engage in any type of inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment, discrimination, or retaliation under the LMSCA’ Non-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, Harassment policies.
- Staff members shall not use corporal punishment or engage in any disciplinary action with the intention of producing physical or emotional pain (such as humiliation, embarrassment, threats, or other punitive or demoralizing actions toward a student), this includes conduct towards the children of staff members enrolled in LMSCA.

### **Electronic Communication**

Communicating via electronic means can be a valuable way to convey information. However, caution should be exercised when staff members are communicating with students via electronic means. At all times, staff members shall abide by LMSCA’s Acceptable Use Policy. Staff members communicating with students via electronic means must do so using LMSCA network and for educational purposes only.

Staff members shall not engage in any unacceptable behavior with students via electronic means. Staff members should also avoid any appearances of impropriety with students via electronic means.

Staff members shall not communicate with students via a student's mobile device, whether phone, text or instant message

Staff members shall not communicate with students via a student's personal email account. If the student doesn't have a school address, and there is a need please work with your program administrator to secure a school-based email.

Staff members shall not accept or initiate connections with current students on social networking sites Ø If a staff member has a social networking site for educational purposes, the staff member shall obtain permission from the principal and parents to engage with students via this site.

### **Reporting Possible or Actual Violations of These Standards**

Students, parents/guardians and staff members shall notify the [Office of Student Protections and Title IX](#) (773-535-4400) and the LMSCA Director if they believe a LMSCA staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates these Standards. Prompt reporting protects all personnel.

LMSCA Staff shall immediately notify the if they believe that they are receiving inappropriate attention from a student, or if they have been subject to sexual advances, comments or communications by a student. Any complaints/notifications shall be logged into Aspen by the Director immediately.

The failure of a LMSCA staff member to timely report conduct that violates these Standards can result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

LMSCA Staff members are mandatory reporters and shall abide by the Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect and Inappropriate Relations between Adults and Students and also have an independent obligation to notify the [Illinois Department of Children and Family Services \(DCFS\)](#) at 800-252-2873 (1-800-25-ABUSE) if they suspect that child abuse or neglect has occurred.

### **Acceptable Supportive/Encouraging Behavior**

It is acceptable to show students that you care. LMSCA Staff Members can promote affirming, inclusive and positive environments for students with your words and body language, such as actively listening, appropriately responding and relaying that you are concerned for students. It is acceptable to high five, fist bump, handshake, or say "give yourself a pat on the back." In order to console a student, it is permissible to offer tissues, offer them time to take a walk, or give the student a quick side hug.

### **Appearances of Impropriety**

Most contact between students and staff is appropriate and professional. For example, it is appropriate for a teacher to address a student's concerns over an assignment after class or provide one-on-one tutoring support. However, there are instances or activities that could be considered to be invasions of appropriate boundaries and can create an actual impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. In order to protect students and staff, staff should avoid activities with students that present opportunities for inappropriate relationships or that create the appearance that the staff and student are in an inappropriate relationship.

**Examples of such activities are described below and must be avoided by staff members.** This list is not exhaustive and there may be situations where these activities are within professional staff/student boundaries. Such situations where these activities may be within professional boundaries are when the staff member's child is friends with another student. In this circumstance the activity may be acceptable as long **as the staff member is not alone with the student (the staff member's child or another person should be present)** and the staff member's supervisor is aware of the staff member's activities.

- Being alone with an individual student out of the view of others, unless required in connection with providing educational services in accordance with your employment (e.g., health screening, counseling, therapy, nursing, personal care and other services required by individualized education plans, 504 plans or other medical condition action plans).
- Inviting or allowing individual students to visit the staff member's home.
- Visiting a student's home or meeting the student at another location outside of school for non-educational purposes.
- Transporting a student in a staff member's private vehicle without permission of the LMSCA Director and the parent. Before an above activity has occurred, staff members should communicate with the appropriate administrator and obtain approval. If any of the above activities occurs and are not approved, the staff member must report the occurrence to the appropriate administrator as soon as possible.

### **Travel/Transportation**

LMSCA Staff members are strongly discouraged from transporting a student in the staff members' private vehicle(s) under any circumstances. However, staff members may transport a student with the written consent of both the LMSCA Director and parent/guardian of the student. Written consent from the parent/guardian must be given

in advance of the trip. If the LMSCA Director gives consent to a staff member to transport a student in a private vehicle, the LMSCA Director must maintain a copy of the LMSCA staff member's driver's license and insurance documentation. If a LMSCA staff member transports a student with permission from the parent/guardian and the principal, efforts should be made for an additional adult to be in the car such that the staff member is not alone with a student outside the view of others.

## **LMSCA (Illinois) Educator Code of Ethics**

### **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, status 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 LMSCA Educator is committed to establishing high professional standards for their practice and striving to meet these standards through their performance.

LMSCA 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 LMSCA Educator is committed to collaborating with local school and district colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning.

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- 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 LMSCA 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 LMSCA 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.

**APPENDIX A:**  
**Lions' Mathematics & Science Christian Academy's**  
**Written Consent Form for the Private Transportation of a Student**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [parent or guardian name] give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ [staff member name] to transport my student \_\_\_\_\_ [student name] in his or her private vehicle.

This permission extends to the following scenarios/situations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
This permission extends to the following days of the week and/or the following times:  
\_\_\_\_\_

In giving this permission, I acknowledge that \_\_\_\_\_ [staff member name] may be alone in his or her private vehicle with my student.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian/Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Parent/Guardian/Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

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Date

**TO BE COMPLETED BY LMSCA DIRECTOR OR DESIGNATE:**

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Signature of Director

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Date