

ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Policies and Procedures

Standards of Ethical Conduct

Adventist Christian Academy (ACA) operates under the direction of the Gulf States Conference of Seventh-day Adventists of the Southern Union of Seventh-day Adventists and the guidelines of the *Southern Union Education Code Pre-K-12*. The Southern Union Education Code includes standards of ethical conduct for school personnel.

The Southern Union Education Code is in harmony with *The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession for the State of Florida* (State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.001 and 6B-1.006).

Adventist Christian Academy, operating under the guidelines of the Southern Union Education Code and the Florida Standards of Ethical Conduct, adopts the following policies and procedures. It is the intent of Adventist Christian Academy that these policies and procedures will fully comply with the requirements of the State of Florida for this school's participation in the Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program. All instructional personnel, educational support employees, and administrator(s) are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct annually. In addition, ACA requires school volunteers to attend ethics in education training.

I. Employment

1. Adventist Christian Academy shall verify that the Head Teacher or Principal, as on-site chief administrative officer, has submitted fingerprints to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for a criminal records check in accordance with Section 1002.42(2)(c), Florida Statutes.
2. Adventist Christian Academy shall require all instructional personnel, educational support employees, volunteers, administrators, and contracted personnel to submit their fingerprints to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for state and national background screening in accordance with Section 1002.421(2)(i), Florida Statutes.
3. Adventist Christian Academy shall not accept instructional personnel, school administrators, or contracted personnel who have direct student contact if he or she fails to meet the background screening standards under Section 435.04, Florida Statutes.

4. Adventist Christian Academy shall not accept instructional personnel and school administrators in any position that requires direct contact with students if that person is ineligible under Section 1012.315, Florida Statutes.

5. Adventist Christian Academy will accept only instructional personnel/administrator whose employment history screening is verified by the Gulf States Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Department of Education (the employer) as required by Section 1002.421(4)(c), Florida Statutes.
6. Adventist Christian Academy shall screen all instructional personnel by using the Florida Department of Education's screening tools and document the findings in accordance with Section 1002.421(4)(c), Florida Statutes.
7. Adventist Christian Academy shall not enter into a confidentiality agreement with any terminated or dismissed instructional personnel, administrators, or employees (including those who resign in lieu of termination) of the Gulf States Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, based on unethical conduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student, as per Section 1002.421(4)(b), Florida Statutes.
8. Adventist Christian Academy shall not make recommendation of a terminated individual to another educational setting without disclosing misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student as required by Section 1002.432(4)(b), F.S. It is understood that any part of an agreement that has the purpose or effect of concealing misconduct is deemed contrary to public policy and cannot be fulfilled.
9. Adventist Christian Academy requires instructional personnel and school administrators to annually complete training on the adopted standards of ethical conduct as per Section 1002.421(4)(b), Florida Statutes.

II. Reporting Professional Misconduct

1. Adventist Christian Academy directs that all employees, educational support employees, school volunteers, and administrators have an obligation [1002.421(4)(b), F.S.] to report misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student.

Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors.

Procedures for Reporting Misconduct:

- Report *immediately* allegations or suspicions of *misconduct by instructional personnel and administrators* to Scott Bowes, Superintendent of Education, Gulf States Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; phone 334-272-7493, extension 105. (Mailing address: Mr. Scott Bowes, Superintendent; Post Office Box 240249; Montgomery, AL 36124-0249.)

- Report *immediately* to Lewis Stanton, Principal, Adventist Christian Academy; phone 850-225-2788 (email address: lstanton2020@gmail.com) allegations or suspicion of *misconduct by a school volunteer or educational support employees* having direct contact with students on campus or during a school-sponsored activity off campus.

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2. Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services.
3. Information on how to identify and report professional misconduct shall be posted at the school on library entrance wall for easy viewing and placed on the school website: <http://www.acapc.org>.

III. Penalties for Failure to Report Professional Misconduct and Liability Protection

1. Penalties for instructional personnel or school staff who fail to report misconduct range from a written reprimand to immediate dismissal. Penalty shall be determined by the Office of Education of the Gulf States Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (the employer) and supported by Adventist Christian Academy School Board.
2. Liability Protection for anyone reporting in good faith shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability.
3. Liability Protection for reporting professional misconduct provides that 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).

IV. Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment, or Neglect and Liability Protection

1. In compliance with State of Florida Statutes 1006.61, F.S. as amended, and the Southern Union Education Code, Adventist Christian Academy directs that all school employees and volunteers have an affirmative duty to report all suspected or actual cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

Procedures for Reporting

- **Report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the Florida Department of Children and Families at the Central Abuse Hotline toll free number 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). Reports may be made online at the secure website <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.** Individuals are to document and report as soon as possible and have a *duty* to comply with child protective investigations.

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- Following the report to the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Head Teacher shall be informed of the suspicions or allegations. The Head Teacher will then contact the Conference Superintendent of Education.
- If the allegations are against the Head Teacher, the report shall be made directly to Scott Bowes, Superintendent of Education (601-818-3221) and to Annie Martin, local School Board Chairman (916-847-2109).

Signs of Abuse

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Information on how to identify and report child abuse, abandonment, or neglect shall be posted at the school for viewing and placed on the school website: <http://www.acapc.org>.

5. Liability Protection for anyone reporting in good faith suspected or actual child abuse, child abandonment, or child neglect shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability

Section 39.203(1)(a), F.S. states that any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in any act authorized or required by this chapter of reporting in good faith any instance of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the department of any law enforcement agency, shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise result by reason of such action.

6. Section 39.203(2)(a), F.S., provides that “No resident or employee of a facility serving children may be subjected to reprisal or discharge because of his or her actions in reporting abuse, abandonment, or neglect pursuant to the requirements of this section.”

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Excerpt from *Southern Union Education Code Pre-K-12*

CHILD ABUSE, ABANDONMENT, OR NEGLECT
Identifying and Reporting Professional Misconduct

Teachers and school administrators are mandated reporters according to law and must follow state guidelines for reporting.

(1) If the child is a minor, report the suspected or alleged abuse immediately to the local law enforcement authorities as required by law.

(2) Following the contact with the law enforcement authorities, inform the head teacher of the suspicions or allegations. The head teacher will then contact the Conference Superintendent of Education.

If the allegations are against the head teacher, the report will be made directly to the Conference Superintendent of Education.

Updated 11/2010; 7/2011; 8/2011; 12/2013; 2015; 8/2017; 1/2010, 9/2012, 9/2020, 8/2021, 3/2023
Adapted, Florida Dept. of Education Office of Professional Practices Services brochure.

Adventist Christian Academy

Identifying and Reporting Professional Misconduct

“By virtue of their leadership capacity, teachers are traditionally held to a high moral standard in a community.”

Adams v. State of Florida Professional Practices Council
406 So 2nd 1170 Fla. 1st DCA 1981

The following behavior may be indicative of misconduct that should be reported--

- Being alone with a student in dark or closed room or secluded area
- Behaving in an overly friendly or familiar way or failing to maintain an appropriate professional boundary with a student or a colleague
- Using forceful or unnecessary physical contact with a student or a colleague
- Administering discipline not compliant with policy
- Accepting or offering of gifts for return of a favor or privilege from students or colleagues
- Badgering or habitually teasing a student
- Mocking or belittling a student or a colleague
- Chronically embarrassing a student or a colleague
- Displaying prejudice or bigotry against a student or a colleague
- Failing to properly supervise students or to ensure student safety
- Retaliating against a student or a colleague for reporting misconduct

If you feel uncomfortable, if you question the person’s motive/actions; if you are unsure--

Report Immediately!

HOW TO REPORT MISCONDUCT

1. Allegations or suspicions of misconduct by a teacher should be reported to (1) Scott Bowes, Superintendent of Education, Gulf States Conference of Seventh Day Adventists; phone 61-818-3221, and to (2) Annie Martin, the School Board Chairman, 916-847-2109.
2. Report to the Head Teacher, Mr. Mark Grice, allegations, or suspicions of misconduct by anyone having direct contact with students on campus or during a school-sponsored activity off campus.

3. Document the activities or details of the misconduct (and secure evidence if applicable).

WHO SHOULD REPORT MISCONDUCT?

Anyone who is aware of or who has observed misconduct should report. All teachers, School Board members, and school volunteers at Adventist Christian Academy have a **duty to report** misconduct. Anyone reporting in good faith shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability.

FAILURE TO REPORT MISCONDUCT

Penalties for instructional personnel/administrators who fail to report misconduct range from a written reprimand to immediate dismissal.