

## PORT CHARLOTTE ADVENTIST SCHOOL (PCAS)

### STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

Adapted from the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida, Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida, and resources/in-services provided by the Florida Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists (SDA).

1. PCAS 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.
2. Our primary concern is the student and development of the student's potential. Employees will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgement and integrity, within the framework and beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.
3. Thus, our mission and concern for the student requires that our instructional personnel:
  - a. 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.
  - b. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
  - c. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program as outlined at Port Charlotte Adventist School.
  - d. Shall not intentionally deny a student access to diverse subject matter relevant to a student's academic program as outlined at PCAS.
  - e. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
  - f. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
  - g. 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, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
  - h. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
  - i. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service.
4. 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:
  - a. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
  - b. Shall not, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition of otherwise qualified, or social and family

background, deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.

- c. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
- d. 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.
- e. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

**TRAINING REQUIREMENT:** All instructional personnel, educational support employees, and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct, as provided and overseen by the Florida Conference of SDA.

**REPORTING MISCONDUCT BY INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATORS:** All employees, educational support employees, and administrators 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 obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violation, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors.

**REPORTS OF MISCONDUCT OF EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE MADE TO:**

Almibar Cruz, Principal  
[almibar.cruz@flcoe.org](mailto:almibar.cruz@flcoe.org), (727) 457-3903

**REPORTS OF MISCONDUCT OF ADMINISTRATORS SHOULD BE MADE TO:**

Sandra Lawrence, Board Chairperson  
[sandeelaw@yahoo.com](mailto:sandeelaw@yahoo.com), (863) 263-5318

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 affect the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted in the main hallway and PCAS office doorway and on our website, [pcadventistschool.com](http://pcadventistschool.com).

**REPORTING CHILD ABUSE, ABANDONMENT, OR NEGLECT:** All employees and agents 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/>.

**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 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.

**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 frequently be 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 indication and should be reported.

**LIABILITY PROTECTION:** 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.

**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)

*These standards of ethical conduct are written in line with PCAS' values and mission. They do not exclude or replace the rights and obligations of individuals under common law. All Adventist schools are private property and PCAS is owned by the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Altamonte Springs, Florida. PCAS joyfully exercises its responsibility to teach SDA faith and morals in all of their fullness. Parents whose religious practices and beliefs run counter to Seventh-day Adventist Church teaching might experience conflicting opinions as we maintain our mission integrity. Sincere questioning of the practices and doctrines of the Adventist faith, whether by students or their parents, in order to more deeply understand them are welcome; but openly hostile or persistent defiance of Adventist/Biblical truths or morality are a violation of the Handbook policies and may result in denial of admission or dismissal from the school.*

