



Faith's Law Code of Conduct

Employee Code of Professional Conduct – Faith’s Law Compliance

Applies to: JK–8 Program | All Faculty, Staff, Coaches, Volunteers, Contractors

Purpose

Science Academy of Chicago (“SAC”) is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and academically excellent STREAM-focused learning environment for all students in Junior Kindergarten through Grade 8. In alignment with SAC’s mission of educating the whole child in a caring environment, all adults serving students must maintain professional relationships and clear boundaries at all times.

Pursuant to Illinois Faith’s Law (105 ILCS 5/22-85.5), SAC adopts the following Employee Code of Professional Conduct to prevent sexual misconduct, grooming behaviors, and inappropriate staff-student interactions. Faith’s Law requires this policy to be posted on the school website and included in staff, student, and family handbooks. This policy applies to:

- Teachers
- Administrators
- Instructional aides
- Coaches
- Tutors
- Extended care staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Guest instructors
- Any adult acting on behalf of SAC

All employees of Science Academy of Chicago are expected to maintain high standards in their job performance, demonstrate integrity and honesty, be considerate and cooperative, and maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students, parents/guardians, staff members, and others. The school is also legally required to obtain employment history review documents under 105 ILCS 5/22-94(c)(3) and (4) for any new applicant.

In addition, the **Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators**, adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education, is incorporated by reference into this policy. Any employee who sexually harasses a student, willfully or negligently fails to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, or otherwise violates an employee conduct standard will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

Professional and Appropriate Conduct

Professional and appropriate employee conduct are important School goals that impact the quality of a safe learning environment and the school community, increasing students’ ability to learn and the School’s ability to educate. To protect students from sexual misconduct by employees, and employees from the appearance of impropriety, state law also recognizes the importance for employees of Science Academy of Chicago to constantly maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students by following established expectations and guidelines for employee–student boundaries.

The Principal or designee shall identify employee conduct standards that define appropriate employee–student boundaries and communicate them to all employees. These standards shall require that, at a minimum:



- Employees who are governed by the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators, adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), comply with its incorporation by reference into this policy.
- Employees complete required training on educator ethics, child abuse, grooming behaviors, and employee–student boundary violations as required by law and applicable School policies, including policies related to Title IX, awareness and prevention of child sexual abuse and grooming behaviors, mandated reporting, and staff development.
- Employees maintain professional relationships with students, including maintaining employee–student boundaries based upon students’ ages, grade levels, and developmental levels, and following School-established guidelines for specific situations, including but not limited to:
 - Transporting a student; Off-campus travel requires parent permission and administrative approval
 - Taking or possessing a photo or video of a student;
 - Meeting with a student or contacting a student outside the employee’s professional role.
- Employees comply with reporting requirements under the **Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.)**, and report prohibited behaviors and/or boundary violations pursuant to applicable School grievance and reporting procedures.
- Employees are subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal, for any violation of employee conduct standards or engagement in any of the following:
 - Violating boundaries for appropriate employee–student conduct or established expectations and guidelines for employee–student relationships;
 - Sexually harassing a student;
 - Willfully or negligently failing to follow reporting requirements under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act or Title IX;
 - Engaging in grooming as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25;
 - Engaging in grooming behaviors.

Grooming behaviors are strictly prohibited and include, at a minimum, sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct is any act, including but not limited to verbal, nonverbal, written, electronic communication, or physical activity, by an employee with direct contact with a student, that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A sexual or romantic invitation;
- Dating or soliciting a date;
- Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialogue;
- Making sexually suggestive comments directed toward or with a student;
- Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature;
- Sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with a student.

4. Reporting Requirement

Any employee, parent/guardian, student, contractor, or volunteer who becomes aware of possible misconduct must immediately report concerns to:

- Principal or Executive Director
- Illinois DCFS Hotline: 1-800-25-ABUSE



- Local law enforcement, if applicable

Reports involving suspected grooming or abuse must be handled in accordance with **Faith's Law, Illinois mandated reporter obligations, and SAC safeguarding procedures.**

5. Parent/Guardian Notification

This notification process shall be coordinated by the Principal or designee. When required by Illinois law, SAC shall promptly notify the parent/guardian of any student involved in an allegation of sexual misconduct by:

- Employees
- Substitute teachers
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agents of the school

6. Handbook Publication and Training

This policy shall be:

- Published in the **SAC Student-Family Handbook**
- Published in the **Employee Handbook**
- Posted on the **SAC website**
- Reviewed annually during staff orientation
- Included in volunteer and coach onboarding
- Revisited before overnight trips, competitions, and extended care programming

LEGAL REFERENCE

- **105 ILCS 5/22-85.5** – Faith's Law
- **325 ILCS 5/** – Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act
- ISBE Faith's Law Guidance