Spectrum Charter School

Board of Trustees Policy 317

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

In accordance with applicable state regulations, including Title 22 Pa. Code Chapter 235, the Spectrum Charter School ("Charter School") Board of Trustees ("Board") has established this policy to create high standards in ethical conduct for the teachers at the Charter School.

Professional practices are behaviors and attitudes that are based on a set of values that the professional education community and the Charter School believe in and accept. These values are evidenced by the professional educator's conduct toward students, colleagues, the Charter School, and the community.

Professional educators at the Charter School are expected to abide by the following:

A) Pennsylvania's Charter School Law, 24 PS 17-1701-A, other applicable school laws of the Commonwealth, all applicable state and federal law, including sections of the Public Employee Relations Act and the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.

B) Professional educators shall maintain high levels of competence throughout their careers.

C) Professional educators shall exhibit consistent and equitable treatment of students, fellow educators, and parents. They shall respect the civil rights of all and not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, culture, religion, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, disabling condition, or vocational interest. This list of bases of discrimination is not all-inclusive.

D) Professional educators shall accept the value of diversity in educational practice. Diversity requires educators to have a range of methodologies and to request the necessary tools for effective teaching and learning.

E) Professional educators shall impart to their students' principles of good citizenship and societal responsibility.

F) Professional educators shall exhibit acceptable and professional language and communication skills. Verbal and written communications with parents, students, and staff shall reflect sensitivity to the fundamental human rights of dignity, privacy, and respect.

G) Professional educators shall be open-minded, knowledgeable, and use appropriate judgment and communication skills when responding to an issue within the educational environment.

H) Professional educators shall keep in confidence information obtained in confidence in the course of professional service unless required to be disclosed by law or by clear and compelling professional necessity as determined by the professional educator.

I) Professional educators shall exert reasonable effort to protect the students from conditions that interfere with learning or are harmful to the student's health and safety.

Ethical Conduct

The professional educator at the Charter School shall not:

A) Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practice regarding official policies of the Charter School or the rules and regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

B) Make threats of violence against Charter School employees, Board of Trustee members, students, or parents/guardians of students.

C) Falsify records or direct or coerce others to do so.

D) Use or distribute illegal controlled substances and/or engage in the abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.

E) Intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.

F) Consume alcoholic beverages on the Charter School property or during school activities when students are present.

Legal obligations

The professional educator shall not engage in conduct prohibited by:

A) The Public School Code, Charter School Law, and other laws and regulations relating to the schools or the education of children.

B) The applicable laws of the Commonwealth establishing ethics of public officials and public employees, including the Public Official and Employee Ethics Law.

Civil rights

The professional educator at the Charter School shall not:

A) Discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, culture, religion, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, disability, or other legally-protected class. This list of bases of discrimination is not all-inclusive.

B) Interfere with a student's or colleague's exercise of political and civil rights and responsibilities.

Improper Personal or Financial Gain

The professional educator at the Charter School shall not:

A) Accept gratuities, gifts, or favors that might impair or appear to impair professional judgment. This shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted only from students, parents of students, other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

B) Exploit a professional relationship for personal gain or advantage.

C) Knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

D) Submit fraudulent request for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

E) Use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

Relationships with Students

The professional educator at the Charter School shall not:

A) Knowingly and intentionally distort or misrepresent evaluations of students.

B) Knowingly and intentionally misrepresent subject matter or curriculum.

C) Sexually harass or engage in sexual relationships with students.

D) Knowingly and intentionally withhold evidence from the proper authorities about violations of the legal obligations as defined within this section.

E) Reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

F) Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student.

G) Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

H) Engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student.

I) Furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

J) Engage in inappropriate professional educator-student relationships. The professional educator shall create boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.

K) Engage in inappropriate communications with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, e-mail, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, Vine, MySpace, and so forth. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

1) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
2) the subject matter of the communication;
3) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
4) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
5) whether the communication is sexually explicit; and
6) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Professional relationships

The professional educator at the Charter School shall not:

A) Knowingly and intentionally deny or impede a colleague in the exercise or enjoyment of a professional right or privilege in being an educator.

B) Knowingly and intentionally distort evaluations of colleagues.

C) Sexually harass a fellow employee.

D) Use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional decisions of colleagues.

E) Threaten, coerce, or discriminate against a colleague who in good faith reports or discloses to a governing agency actual or suspected violation of law, agency regulations, or standards.

F) Reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

G) Harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the Charter School.

H) Not violate Charter School policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

Violations

Individual professional conduct reflects upon the practices, values, integrity, and reputation of the profession and of the Charter School. Violations of this policy may include, but not be limited to, verbal warnings, written warnings, reprimands, suspension, dismissal, or civil and criminal sanctions.

All discipline reprimands or criticism by the Board of Trustees of a professional employee shall be done only when the Board is in executive session. Individual Board members shall not make any statement to the news media concerning the disciplining, reprimanding, or criticizing of a professional employee which may have taken place during the time the Board met in executive session.

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH THE CHARTER OR APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS AND/OR CHARTER CONTROL.

Approved this day 18 of August, 2021

Reapproved this day 15th of September 2026

President

Secretary