

Employee Code of Conduct

PERSONAL APPEARANCE/STANDARDS OF DRESS

The Board of Directors believes that teachers and other Vincent Academy staff serve as role models. They should therefore maintain professional standards of dress and grooming. Just as overall attitude and instructional competency contribute to a productive learning environment, so do appropriate dress and grooming.

Staff members, during school hours, are expected to wear clothing that will add dignity to the educational profession, will present an image consistent with their job responsibilities, and will not interfere with the learning process. Our goal is to develop a dress code that is effective in serving our roles as elementary educators while communicating a professional attitude to our students, families, peers and the broader school community.

A definite case can be made that the roles of elementary educators warrant a more "casual" dress code than the higher grades. We are interactive. We are constantly moving around, bending, sitting on the floor, reaching, etc., while paint, ink, glue, markers, glitter are only some of our tools.

Although we rely on professional judgment to support the dress code at Vincent Academy, we want to provide some examples of items that do not meet the standard. Those items include, but are not limited to: see-through clothing; torn items; items that show undergarments; bare midriffs; t-shirts with questionable logos; flip flops; sagging pants; unclean items.

Blue jeans, as part of professional attire, can be worn.

Clothing or jewelry with logos that depict and/or promote gangs, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, violence, illegal activities, profanity, or obscenity are not permitted.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

It is the policy of Vincent Academy that no teacher or staff member will use corporal punishment against a student. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or the use of any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior. While the use of appropriate touching is part of daily life and is important for student development, staff members

must ensure that they do not exceed appropriate behavior. If a child or other staff member specifically requests that he or she not be touched, then that request must be honored without question. If the child or other staff member has not requested that they not be touched, then the following forms of touching are considered appropriate:

- Hugs initiated by the student
- Hugs given with permission
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Hand-shakes
- “High fives” and hand slapping
- Touching shoulders and arms around the shoulder area
- Touching face to check temperature, wipe away a tear, and remove hair from face or other similar types of contact for similar purposes
- Patting a student on the knee (grades K through 5)
- Sitting students on one’s lap (grades K-2) for purposes of comforting the child
- Holding hands while walking with small children or children with significant disabilities
- Arms around shoulders
- Reasonable self defense
- Reasonable defense of another
- Reasonable restraint of a violent person to protect others or property

Except as discussed above, the following forms of touching are never appropriate:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces

- Kisses on the mouth
- Corporal punishment
- Sitting students on one's lap (grades 3 and above)
- Touching buttocks, chests or genital areas
- Pushing a person or another person's body part (other than in self-defense, defense of another or property)
- Showing affection in isolated areas
- Wrestling with students or other staff-member
- Bench-pressing another person
- Tickling, piggyback rides or massages
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Any form of sexual contact
- Poking fingers at another person that results in an offensive contact

This policy does not prevent touching a student for the purpose of guiding them along a physical path, helping them up after a fall, engaging in a rescue or the application of Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or other emergency first-aid. Nor does it prohibit the use of reasonable force and touching in self-defense or in the defense of another. Restraining a child who is trying to engage in violent or inappropriate behavior is also allowed. Only such force as necessary to defend one's self, another or the child or to protect property is legally allowed. Excessive force is prohibited.

An attempt to violate this policy by placing another person in reasonable apprehension that he or she will be a victim of one of the acts prohibited under this policy is also prohibited. A reasonable apprehension normally includes an overt act, but words alone may be sufficient to violate this policy if the words uttered were such that under the circumstances it could be

reasonably assumed that physical contact would be attempted. Violation of this policy could subject the staff member to discipline up to and including termination. This policy must necessarily be somewhat flexible. Sometimes, especially when dealing with younger children or children with a disability, touching is more appropriate. A touch for the purpose of helping (i.e. cleaning up a small child after a bathroom accident) may be appropriate in limited circumstances although clearly inappropriate in more general circumstances. An accidental touch is never inappropriate provided it is a true accident. It is impossible to define each and every instance when touching is inappropriate. Staff should apply the rules of common sense in the circumstances they find themselves.

Reporting

When any staff member, parent, or student becomes aware of a staff member having crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, or has a strong suspicion of misconduct, he or she must report the suspicion to the Executive Director promptly. A reasonable suspicion means something more than a mere suspicion but less than absolute knowledge. It is based on facts that would lead a reasonable person to believe the conduct occurred. Prompt reporting is essential to protect students, the suspected staff member, any witnesses, and the school as a whole. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness of, or concern about, student behavior that crosses boundaries, or any situation in which a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse.

Investigating

The Executive Director will promptly investigate and document the investigation of any allegation of sexual misconduct or inappropriate behavior, using such support staff or outside assistance, as he or she deems necessary and appropriate under the circumstances. Throughout this fact-finding process, the investigating administrator, and all other privy to the investigation, shall protect the privacy interests of any affected student(s) and/or staff member(s) including any potential witnesses, as much as possible. The investigating administrator shall promptly notify the Board of Directors in closed session of the existence and status of any investigations. Upon completion of any such investigations, the Executive Director shall report to the Board of Directors any conclusions reached. The investigating administrator shall consult with legal counsel, as appropriate, prior to, during, and after conducting any investigation.

Consequences

Staff members who have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, and where appropriate, will be reported to authorities for potential legal action.

California Penal Code Section 11166 requires any teacher or child care custodian who has knowledge of, or observes, a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately, or as soon as practically possible by telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The following is a list of conduct that is prohibited and will not be tolerated by the School. It is not an all-inclusive list, but rather a list designed to give examples of the types of conduct prohibited by the School.

- Falsification of employment records, employment information, or other School records.
- Recording the work time of another employee or allowing any other employee to record your work time, or allowing falsification of any time card, either your own or another's.
- Theft, deliberate or careless damage or loss of any School property or the property of any employee or customer.
- Provoking a fight or fighting during working hours or on School property.
- Participating in horseplay or practical jokes on School time or on School premises where such conduct might be a safety risk or might be interpreted as offensive.
- Carrying firearms or any other dangerous weapons on School premises at any time.
- Consuming, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs during working hours or at any time on School property or job sites.

- Insubordination, including but not limited to, failure or refusal to obey the orders or instructions of a supervisor or member of management, or the use of abusive or threatening language toward a supervisor or member of management.
- Unreported absence on scheduled workdays.
- Unauthorized use of School equipment, time, materials, facilities, or the School name.
- Sleeping or malingering on the job.
- Failure to observe working schedules, including the required rest and meal periods.
- Engaging in criminal conduct whether or not related to job performance.
- Soliciting other employees for membership, funds, or other similar activity in connection with any outside organization during your working time or the working time of the employee(s) solicited.
- Distributing unauthorized literature or any written or printed material during working time or in work areas. ("Working time" does not include your meal and break periods.)
- Failure to timely notify your supervisor when you are unable to report to work.
- Failure of an employee to obtain permission to leave work for any reason during normal working hours.
- Abuse of sick leave.
- Making or accepting personal telephone calls during working hours except in emergencies.
- Failure to provide a physician's certificate when requested or required to do so.
- Wearing extreme, unprofessional or inappropriate styles of dress or hair while working.
- Making derogatory racial, ethnic, religious or sexual remarks or gestures; any violation of the Harassment and/or Equal Employment Opportunity policy; or using profane or abusive language at any time on School premises or during working hours.

- Violation of any safety, health, security or School rule.
- Working overtime without authorization or refusing to work assigned overtime.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Employees may, during the course of their duties, be advised of certain confidential business matters and affairs of the School regarding its business practices, students, suppliers and employees. Work duties may also place an employee in a position of trust and confidence with respect to certain trade secrets and other proprietary information relating to the business of the School and not generally known to the public or competitors. Such proprietary information includes student information, competitive strategies, marketing plans, personnel information and financial information. Employees shall not, either during your employment with the School or any time in the future, directly or indirectly:

- Disclose or furnish, directly or indirectly, to any other person, firm, agency, corporation, client, business, or enterprise, any confidential information acquired during your employment;
- Individually or in conjunction with any other person, firm, agency, School, client, business, or corporation, employ or cause to be employed any confidential information in any manner whatsoever, except in furtherance of the business of the School;
- Without the written consent of the School, publish, deliver, or commit to being published or delivered, any copies, abstracts, or summaries of any files, records, documents, drawings, specifications, lists, equipment and similar items relating to the business of the School, except to the extent required in the ordinary course of your duties.

Upon termination of employment, employees are required to immediately return to the School all property of the School in as good condition as when received (normal wear and tear excepted) including, but not limited to, all files, records, documents, drawings, specifications, lists, equipment and supplies, promotional materials, and similar items relating to the business of the School.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All employees must avoid situations that result in actual or even potential conflicts of interest. Personal, social and economic relationships with competitors, suppliers, customers, parents, or co-employees that may impair an employee's ability to exercise good judgment on behalf of the School or which give the appearance of such impairment create an actual or potential conflict of interest. For example, romantic or personal relationships between a supervisor and subordinate employee can lead to supervisory problems, claims of harassment and morale problems.

Any employee involved in such situations or relationships must immediately and fully disclose the nature of the situation or relationship to the Executive Director so a determination can be made as to whether an actual or potential conflict exists, and if so, how to correct the situation.

Vincent Academy expects employees to devote their best efforts to the interests of our school. Vincent Academy recognizes employees' right to engage in activities outside of their employment, which are of a private nature and unrelated to our business. However, outside activities (second jobs, side businesses, clubs, etc.) must not interfere with employees' ability to fully perform their job duties at Vincent Academy or create a conflict of interest with their statutory duty of loyalty to the School. The School prohibits employees from working with another School or external organization that competes with Vincent Academy whether as a regular employee or as a consultant.

Any questions regarding possible conflict of interest, should be referred to the Executive Director. A violation of this policy will result in immediate and appropriate discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

Outside Employment

Full time employees are expected to devote their full professional effort to their positions at Vincent Academy. If an employee wishes to participate in outside work activities, the employee is required to obtain written approval from the Executive Director prior to starting those activities. Approval will be granted unless the activity conflicts with Vincent Academy's interests. In general, outside work activities are not allowed when they:

- Prevent employees from performing work for which they are employed at Vincent Academy.
- Involve organizations that are doing or seek to do business with Vincent Academy including actual or potential vendors.
- Violate provisions of law or Vincent Academy policies or rules.
- When the employee is on a medical leave (FMLA/CFRA/PDL or any other medical leave).

Employees' obligations to Vincent Academy must be given priority. Full time employees are hired and continue employment with the understanding that Vincent Academy is their primary employer and that other employment, commercial involvement or volunteer activity that is in conflict with the business interests of the school is strictly prohibited.

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Vincent Academy expects employees to act responsibly and professionally when incurring and submitting expenses. The organization will reimburse employees for reasonable expenses on pre-approved business. This includes, for example, travel fares, accommodations, meals, tips, telephone and fax charges, and purchases made on behalf of the organization.

Vincent Academy does not pay for local travel to and from the office (regular commute). If employees use their vehicles for business travel, mileage will be reimbursed as per the IRS current mileage rates and for appropriate parking fees. Vincent Academy will not be responsible for fuel, maintenance, traffic or parking violations.

General guidelines

Original receipts are required for reimbursement of all expenses except for per diems. These expenses include:

- Original boarding passes for airplane / train travel
- Credit card receipts

- Detailed merchant receipts

Receipts must be accompanied by a summary that outlines:

- The nature of the expense
- The name and titles of the individuals involved
- The purpose for the expense

Expense summaries must be submitted with receipts and approved by the Business and Operations Manager.

All expenses and summaries must be submitted within 30 days to Business and Operations Manager for payment.

Travel guidelines

Employees are required to fly coach class with the lowest available airfare for non-stop travel.

If a car rental is required, employees are requested to rent mid-sized or compact vehicles. Employees will be reimbursed for the fuel costs associated with renting a vehicle.

Employees will be reimbursed for reasonable hotel accommodations. Discounted room rates should be requested at the time of room booking.

Per diem rates for meal and incidentals will be provided; no receipts are required. The per diem amount paid for each day of travel is set out under state or federal guidelines. Per diem rates will not be paid where other meal arrangements (such as a luncheon included with an event) are provided.

The following list includes examples of non-reimbursable expenses:

- Personal travel insurance
- Personal reading materials
- Childcare
- Toiletries, cosmetics, or grooming products
- Expenses occurred by spouses, children, or relatives
- In-room movies or video games

- Sporting activities, shows, etc.
- Alcohol with meals

Any questions related to the content of this policy or its interpretation should be directed to the Operations Manager.