

Faith's Law(Website)

Starting July 1, 2023, a new law took effect for all Illinois schools. Faith's Law is named after a prevention advocate and child sexual abuse survivor from Illinois who pushed for change to state laws related to educator sexual misconduct in K-12 schools.

Sexual misconduct is defined as any act, including, but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, by an employee or agent of the school district, charter school or nonpublic school with direct contact with a student that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Such an act includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

1. A sexual or romantic invitation.
2. Dating or soliciting a date.
3. Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog.
4. Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student.
5. Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.
6. A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with a student

Faith's Law Resource Guide

ISBE has developed and maintains the [Faith's Law Resource Guide](#) that includes guidance for pupils, parents/guardians, and teachers about sexual abuse responses and prevention resources available in their community, including the contact information of entities that provide services for victims of child sexual abuse and their families.

GCA Employee Code of Professional Conduct

Grace Christian Academy has developed and implemented an [Employee Code of Professional Conduct](#) in accordance with Board Policy 5:120 Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest in compliance with Faith's Law.

GCA Employee Code of Professional Conduct

All school employees 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. In addition, the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators, adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education, is incorporated into this Code of Professional Conduct. 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 (325 ILCS 5/1 et seq.), engages in grooming as defined by 720 ILCS 5/11-25, engages in grooming behaviors, violates boundaries for appropriate school employee-student conduct, engages in sexual misconduct as defined in 105 ILCS 5/22-85.5, or otherwise violates an employee conduct standard will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

Professional and appropriate employee conduct are important 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. Expectations below are applicable to all employees, in compliance with Illinois School Code provisions enacted under Public Act 102-0676, referred to as Faith's Law and include the following minimum standards in addition to all applicable federal and state law and regulations and applicable school policies:

1. All employees are expected to adhere to the core principles, values, and responsibilities applicable to Illinois educators outlined in the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators.
2. All employees are explicitly prohibited from engaging in grooming behaviors or sexual misconduct with students, including, but are not limited to (i) any act, including but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, (ii) by an employee with direct contact with a student, (iii) that is directed or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - a. A sexual or romantic invitation.
 - b. Dating or soliciting a date.
 - c. Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog.
 - d. Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student.
 - e. Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.
 - f. A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student.

3. Employees are expected to 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:
 - a. Employees are strictly prohibited from using any form of communication with students (e-mails, letters, notes, text messages, phone calls, conversations) that includes any subject matter that would be deemed unprofessional and inappropriate between an employee and student.
 - b. Employees are not permitted to transport GCA students in the employee's privately owned vehicle unless the employee has obtained the prior permission of the Principal to do so.
 - c. Employees are not permitted to take or possess a photo or video of a student on their private devices. Student pictures for school sponsored activities used in furtherance of the school's educational mission are permitted.
 - d. Employees are not permitted to meet with a student or contact a student outside the employee's professional role.
 - e. Employees are expected to avoid crossing a line that results in an actual or perceived inappropriate relationship.
4. School employees are mandated reporters and required to report prohibited behaviors and/or boundary violations pursuant to Board policies 2:265, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure; and 5:90, Abused and Neglected Child Reporting.
5. Employees are required to complete training related to educator ethics, child abuse, grooming behaviors, and boundary violations as required by law and policies 2:265, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure; 4:165, Awareness and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Grooming Behaviors; 5:90, Abused and Neglected Child Reporting; and 5:100, Staff Development Program.