Dakota Christian School

Faculty Handbook

2026-2027

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Pledge to the Christian Flag

I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag, and to the Savior for whose Kingdom it stands, one Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again with life and liberty for all who believe.

Pledge to the Bible

I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make it a lamp to my feet and a light upon my path, and will hide its words in my heart, that I might not sin against God.

Pledge to the American Flag

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	**Page 1-2**
Accidents	**Page 3**
Advising Extra-Curricular Activities	**Page 3**
Announcements	**Page 3**
Attendance	**Page 3**
Board-Staff Communications	**Page 3**
Bomb Threat Procedures	**Page 3**
Book/Materials Policy	**Page 4**
Bullying	**Page 4**
Chapels and Small Group Discussions	**Page 4**
Child Abuse/Neglect	**Page 4**
Class Sponsors	**Page 4**
Communicable Disease Policy	**Page 5**
Continuing Education (See Salary and Benefits)	**Page 5**
Contracts	**Page 5**
Copyrights	**Page 6**
Devotions	**Page 6**
Discipline	**Page 6**
Drop/Add Procedure	**Page 6**
Eligibility Requirements	**Page 6**
Faculty Deportment	**Page 7**
Faculty Information and Meetings	**Page 7**
Field Trips and Excursions	**Page 7**
Fire and Tornado Drill Procedures	**Page 7**
General Behavior Policies for K-6th Grades	**Page 7**
Grading Scale	**Page 8**
Hall, Gym, and Parking Lot Duty	**Page 8**
Homework	**Page 9**
Heartland Christian Educators Convention	**Page 9**
Instructional Improvement	**Page 9**
Instructional Materials	**Page 9**
Intruder Procedure	**Page 9**
Leaving School	**Page 10**
Lesson Plans	**Page 10**
Library Use	**Page 10**
Lockdown Policy	**Page 10**
Lunch	**Page 10**
Open Gym Policy	**Page 10**
Parent/Public Complaints about School Personnel	**Page 10**
Parent-Teacher Conferences	**Page 11**
Permission to Leave the Classroom	**Page 11**
Physical Examinations	**Page 11**
Planning Periods	**Page 11**
Political Activity	**Page 11**
Power Loss Procedures	**Page 11**
Professional Qualification and Records	**Page 11**
Property Damage	**Page 11**
Punctuality and Presence	**Page 12**
Report Cards	**Page 12**
Restraint and Seclusion	**Page 12**
Salary and Benefits	**Page 12**
Scheduling of Activities	**Page 13**
School Board Member Visits	**Page 13**
School Equipment Use	**Page 13**

Semester Exams **Page 13**
Sexual Harassment Policy **Page 13**
Sick Leave Bank **Page 14**
Sportsmanship **Page 14**
Staff Relationships **Page 14**
Staff-Room **Page 15**
Staff-Student Relationships **Page 15**
Student Dress Code **Page 15**
Student Medications **Page 15**
Student Permission to Leave School **Page 15**
Student Transportation Policy **Page 15**
Study Halls **Page 16**
Supplies **Page 16**
Teacher Hours **Page 16**
Teacher Illness/Personal Leave **Page 16**
Teacher Responsibility Regarding Classrooms **Page 16**
Telephone **Page 16**
SD Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers **Page 16-17**
Joint Position Statement on Ethical Job Search Practices **Page 17**

WELCOME TO DAKOTA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

The information contained in this handbook is your guide to functioning well and successfully at Dakota Christian School. This booklet will help you be an informed and confident teacher. Part of this confidence arises when all teachers follow a common set of policies. The school board mandates some of these policies, while our faculty and/or administrator have implemented others. As with any list of policies, changes will and should occasionally occur. Please submit recommendations to the administrator at any time.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

We believe parents have the primary responsibility from God to provide consistent Christian training and nurture for their children (Ephesians 6:4). Realizing this awesome responsibility, parents have organized Dakota Christian School to be co-laborers, preparing young people to be future Christian citizens and leaders in God's world and teaching them to let Christ permeate every part of life.

The basis of this Christian school is the infallible Word of God written in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as they are generally interpreted in the historic evangelical confessions of faith. In accordance with these confessions, we hold unreservedly to the sovereignty of God, revealed in the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the world and thus over every department of human activity, and submit unconditionally to the authority of Holy Scriptures, thereby recognizing these Scriptures as the supreme and final standard for Christian education and all other matters of faith and life. Students, regardless of their career choice or calling in life, grow in wisdom to know God and to respond to Him in every dimension of creation and in every aspect of their lives.

Acknowledging Christ pre-eminent as Lord of the universe (Col. 1:18), as Redeemer of a people fallen into sin, and as the Sovereign Ruler over all of life, education at Dakota Christian School is a refreshing and renewing alternative to government education, "...so that we are not conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of our minds" (Roman 12:1, 2).

STATEMENT OF MISSION

The mission of Dakota Christian School is to assist parents by providing education based on a biblical worldview, thereby enabling their children to grow in Christian wisdom, to nurture godly character, and to serve Christ as Lord. (Philippians 2:11, II Timothy 3:17)

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Dakota Christian School does not discriminate in its employment policies and practices, or in its educational program on the basis of race, color, age, sex, handicap, national origin, or ancestry.

STATEMENT OF GOALS

1. **To guide students to choose Jesus as their Savior and Lord in response to God's covenant.**
2. **To establish a Christian value system based on the Bible.**
   Students must be assisted and led to make choices rooted in God's Word so that decisions in daily life are made in accordance with the will and way of Jesus Christ.
3. **To develop a desire to learn about and enjoy God's creation.**
   We seek to stimulate in students a desire to investigate and probe what God has created and what he has enabled man to discover and develop. We nurture the joy of discovering the vastness and beauty of God's creation.
4. **To develop skills to assume their place of responsibility in God's kingdom and society.**
   We seek to refine the basic elementary skills while expanding to make students proficient in thought processes, oral skills, and the skills of proper social interaction.
5. **To develop the unique potential of each individual as an image-bearer of God.**
   We help students realize they are image-bearers of God, with individual talents and needs. Opportunities are given to explore potential in areas such as choir, band, art, drama, term papers, special projects, sports, and guidance testing to direct students to identify their own God-given abilities, capacities, and interests.

6. **To develop Christian character and behavior.**
   We seek to develop within students a knowledge of, a sensitivity to, and responsiveness to God's Word and the world. We help students realize that every thought and action in study, sports, work, and leisure must be brought into captivity to the obedience in Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Thus, love and forgiveness are basic ingredients in Christian students' lives, which bear witness to Christ and to the community.
7. **To develop redeemed physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental health.**
   With the foundation of the Word of God, principles of living are taught in class, in physical education, school-sponsored social activities, and personal counseling.

OUR CODE OF CHRISTIAN PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Christian teachers have an obligation to:

1. Honor God and cultivate a sanctified life.
2. Train students to glorify God and mold their wills toward their Creator, rather than themselves.
3. Maintain their God-given authority over students and faithfully share their great responsibility.
4. Recognize their colleagues as members of the body of Christ and maintain an attitude of constructive cooperation.
5. Follow the precepts of the Holy Bible in loving God first and their neighbors as themselves.
6. Follow Matthew 18 in dealing with all personal or professional conflicts and disputes.
7. Recognize the created responsibility of parents and to aid parents in fulfilling that responsibility.
8. Interact tactfully, cooperatively, and respectfully with the general public and, especially, DCS society members.

ACCIDENTS

Report any accidents or injuries to the administrator. Contact parents and document what happened and responses taken.

ADVISING EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Faculty members will be asked to sponsor various student activities. Although the nature of the activities will place different demands on the sponsor, the following general guidelines apply:

1. The faculty member should assist the group, not do everything.
2. The faculty member should guide the group so they establish appropriate purposes and accomplish constructive activities.
3. Activity sponsors are responsible for the behavior of their group members at all times, whether practice or rehearsal is held within or outside the school day. Sponsors are also responsible for locking and checking all doors and shutting off all lights after all the students have left.
4. The faculty should be aware of students driving to and from these activities. Any reckless driving should be brought to the attention of the student or parent drivers. All caravan drivers are to obey traffic laws. If continued problems occur, the principal should be notified.
5. The faculty should keep the principal well-informed of the activities of the group.
6. The faculty should ensure that the group follows school policy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

All announcements for PreK – 12th grades should be turned in to the office secretary by 8:00 a.m. They will be printed daily, posted on the web site, emailed, and read to 7th-12th grade students.

ATTENDANCE

Each 7th – 12th grade teacher must take attendance for each class period, including study halls. First hour absences and lunch count must be reported to the office via Educate by 8:35 a.m., so absences can be reported on the daily announcements and lunch count can be reported to the kitchen. Use Educate to record all absences and tardies.

Preschool – 6th grade teachers will be responsible to record absences on Educate in their respective classrooms. Lunch count must be reported to the office via Educate by 8:35 a.m. See Attendance Policy in the Student Handbook for further guidelines on student absences and tardies.

BOARD-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The DCS School Board desires to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication, however, will be through the administrator. Faculty members may appeal administrative decisions on important matters, provided that the administrator is notified of the appeal, all of the proper line of authority has been followed, and Matthew 18 has been followed.

Staff members are reminded that board meetings are open to the public -- including them.
All official communications from the board will go through the administrator. The administrator will keep you abreast of all board policies, concerns, and actions.

BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

1. Record the message using the form provided.
2. Ensure that the line the perpetrator is on remains open. If possible signal for help and have that person inform the administrator.
3. Inform the Police—911.
4. Evacuate the building when instructed to do so using the fire escape routes.
5. All students and faculty should report any suspicious item or behavior.
6. Do not use cell phones or radios during the alert. They could activate a bomb.
7. Students may not leave the premises, exit to their vehicle, or use a cell phone.

BOOK AND MATERIALS POLICY

All student textbooks are numbered and teachers must maintain a list of which books the student has

been issued. Teachers should remind the students that textbooks and related materials are their responsibility and must be returned or used with only normal wear or the student will lose part or the entire book and materials deposit which they paid at registration. If there is damage, the teacher should inform the office to deduct an appropriate amount from the student's $75.00 book and materials deposit. This may be done throughout the school year as well as at the end of each semester.

BULLYING

Bullying of students by other students or by employees of DCS is contrary to the commitment of this school to maintain a constructive, safe school climate conducive to student learning and to foster an environment in which all student are treated with respect and dignity. School authorities will not tolerate bullying of students.

Bullying consists of repeated physical, verbal, non-verbal, written electronic, or any conduct directed toward a student that it results in an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment, or interferes with a student's academic performance.

School authorities will act to investigate all complaints of bullying. Anyone found to have violated this policy is subject to discipline pursuant to DCS's student discipline procedure. This policy may not be interpreted to prohibit civil exchange or opinions or debate protected under the state or federal constitutions if the opinion expressed does not otherwise materially or substantially disrupt the education process or intrude upon the rights of others.

CHAPELS AND SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Teachers will be asked to assist with chapel. In addition, the chapel coordinator(s) may work with classes, various clubs, and organizations to organize chapel presentations.

Chapel Committees will schedule each chapel and will be responsible for set-up each chapel day. Chapel will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays for 7th – 12th grades, Thursday's for 3rd – 6th grades, and on Fridays for PreK – 2nd grades. An all-school chapel will be held once a month.

The moods of reverence and worship are to be maintained and enriched as we enter our chapel times. As a model of Christian living, staff will attend chapels.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Any staff member who sees evidence that a student may have been abused or neglected at home or in the school is to immediately report this to the principal. A written report will be immediately filed with the principal, giving the date, time, location, and details of their observations. This report is to be kept confidential. The principal will handle the matter after the report has been written.

CLASS SPONSORS

High school class sponsors are to be completely informed about and arrange all activities, and are expected to keep the principal informed about such activities. Sponsors must ensure that students follow the policy manual.

Class sponsors will advise and supervise all class activities and ensure that they are carried out in a proper, orderly, Christian manner.

1. **The Freshman class** is allowed one fund-raiser per year with administrator approval prior to the beginning of the fundraiser date.

2. **The Sophomore class** is required one fund-raiser per year with administrator approval prior to the beginning of the fundraiser date.

3. **The Junior class** will:
   a. Sell birthday calendars as a fund-raiser each fall. A file will be passed on from the previous advisor

that contains information regarding the online program used to run the calendars. Along with the prior mentioned fundraiser, the Junior class is allowed to get administrative approval prior to the start date to hold another fundraising event.

b. Organize and present a Junior-Senior Banquet each spring, using class funds. A limit of $1500.00 of class funds may be spent for the banquet. (See Board Policy #541 for further guidelines.)

4. **The Senior class** will:
   a. Organize graduation and choose a class verse, color, theme, and text, subject to approval by the school board. All expenses for graduation will be paid for out of the class funds.
   b. Plan a class trip. (See Board Policy #542 for guidelines.)
   c. Choose a gift for the school and will use their remaining class funds to purchase the gift at the end of the school year.
      i. All class purchases must be approved by the sponsors and bills submitted to the office for payment. All bills to be paid for from the class funds must be initialed by the class sponsor.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

DCS has full policies and procedures regarding communicable diseases. If you are dealing with bodily fluids in a science class, please ask the administrator for an outline of the correct procedures to follow. Students and staff diagnosed with such diseases are not automatically prohibited from reporting to school for classes and duty. However, if such conditions are present, there may need to be precautions taken to ensure the safety of everyone else. If you have questions, please ask the administrator.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

See SALARY AND BENEFITS

CONTRACTS: RENEWAL/NON-RENEWAL/RESIGNATION/DISMISSAL

The school board will request to know teacher's intentions for the following year (whether or not you plan to return) in January. Contracts will be offered after the February board meeting and must be returned signed or unsigned by the date indicated on the contract (normally two weeks after the February board meeting). Teachers may request a 2 week extension, not to exceed the Friday before the following board meeting, whichever comes first. Following the extension period, if a teacher has not signed the contract, the board will request that they return the contract. Following this, if the teacher wishes to be rehired, they will be considered along with any other applicants for the position.

Non-renewal of contracts will only take place when proper procedures have been followed. The teacher would be informed of the situation at least 30 days before new contracts were to be issued. The situation will be properly documented concerning reasons and records. An opportunity for a hearing will be given and the teacher may request that a grievance committee be formed to make a final recommendation.

Note: In such matters, the focus of concern should be on correcting weaknesses or problems. Whenever possible, probationary periods would be established to correct any negative conditions.

Teachers are obligated to uphold the requirements of their contracts. Resignation should only be requested under very unusual circumstances, such as ill health or matters which could prevent the upholding of the requirements. Also, if a teacher, after signing a contract, is offered a new position which is considered a professional advancement, the teacher could request to be released from the present contract. Under such conditions, the board and the teacher would meet to decide to terminate or not terminate the contract.

Teacher dismissal would only take place when a serious breach of contract has occurred. Such conditions would include physical or mental disability to fulfill the contract, gross inefficiency, or conduct that is detrimental to the school. Again, in such an unlikely event, full documentation will be made, hearings made possible, and the potential for a grievance committee opened also. All proceedings would be kept confidential in order to protect the teacher and the school from resulting harm.

COPYRIGHTS

All teachers are to comply with the U.S. Copyright laws. Anyone who violates copyright laws is liable for his or her own actions. The school will not be held responsible.

DEVOTIONS

Each morning, the first period class will be opened with scripture reading and prayer (five minutes has been added to this hour). Please make this as real and meaningful as possible. Promoting Christian spirituality is part of our reason for existence.

DISCIPLINE

1. "Common Sense" is the key and the most important element in good classroom discipline. A positive environment is indispensable to learning. Neither the teacher nor the students in the classroom should let their conduct prevent others from learning.
2. Be sure that you state simply and clearly what you expect of the students, and then see that you get it. This requires vigilance.
3. Be objective. One of the best compliments one can pay a teacher is that they show no favoritism.
4. Be consistent. Say what you mean and mean what you say.
5. Know your students. Consult the student record files. Know what to expect, and yet don't make a self-fulfilling prophecy. Be ready to deal with behaviors dealt with in the past, but don't label the students before you deal with them yourself.
6. Be prepared for each lesson, each day. There is nothing more stressful for a teacher and nothing more inviting of trouble than for a teacher to be ill prepared for class. Proper preparation includes:
   a. Taking time to go through the lesson.
   b. Planning assignments with the students' point of view in mind, not just the material to be covered.
   c. Supplementing the textbook. Have and use other reference material available.
   d. Keeping up with current events and relating subject matter to the present whenever possible.
7. Make sure your first, and all, impressions are good ones.
   a. Be neat in appearance.
   b. Have a well-kept classroom. Report any messes or damage promptly to the office.
   c. Be efficient. Correct and return student work promptly.
   d. Begin the period with an anticipatory set that will motivate the students to learn the material for the day.
   e. Be friendly and understanding, but insist upon proper respect at all times.
8. Some suggestions for dealing with problems:
   a. Try personal conferences.
   b. Consult the principal, who is there to help.
   c. Consult the students' parents. They are responsible for their children and usually are willing to cooperate.
9. Major disciplinary issues should be reported to the administrator and head teacher for information or handling.
10. For specifics regarding DCS Discipline Policies, please refer to the Parent/Student Handbook you are also issued.

DROP/ADD PROCEDURE

In order for a student in grades 9 – 12 to drop and/or add a course, they must have permission from the administrator and guidance counselor. After receiving permission, the student will receive a drop/add slip, which must be first signed by the parent/guardian, next by the teacher, and then by the administrator or guidance counselor. This must be done within the first 10 days of the course.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A variety of co-curricular activities is offered by Dakota Christian School. These may help to supplement the learning that takes place in the classroom. Participation in these activities is a privilege that all students are encouraged to use.

Each activity has its own code of specific requirements, which are necessary for operation. The sponsors of each activity will make participating students and their parents aware of these requirements. In addition to these standards, students involved in such activities must follow the standards of conduct expected of all students found elsewhere in this handbook and in the Parent-Student Handbook.
Students participating in any extra-curricular activities will be expected to maintain a GPA of 1.33 (D+) per semester, not cumulative, and must be passing all classes. Students will be evaluated two weeks into

each semester and weekly afterward to determine their status. If a student is failing said standards (except at the end of the semester), he/she will be ineligible for one week in all extra-curriculars. They can be reinstated if meeting the standards after the one week period. A grace period of 2 weeks will be given at the beginning of each semester.

FACULTY DEPORTMENT

As appearance is a part of the impression one makes, faculty and staff are expected to use good taste in matters of dress and personal grooming and to reveal the professionalism they represent by their deportment. Administration will give prior notice of when occasional blue jean days will be allowed. Unprofessional conduct or behavior detrimental to the name of Christ will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action and/or termination.

FACULTY INFORMATION and MEETINGS

Announcements will be distributed to each teacher. Devotions for full-time faculty are normally the first day of each school week at 7:30 a.m. Elementary and secondary staff meetings take place periodically and will be announced well in advance or as needed per administration.

FIELD TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS

Educational field trips will be planned and conducted in accordance with proper guidelines. Field trips must be approved by the administrator. If you are considering a field trip with students, talk to the administrator first in order to receive the guidelines and procedures.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILL PROCEDURES

Our primary concern during a fire drill is that the building be vacated quietly and safely. Since we have a one-story building, we should be able to evacuate in less than 45 seconds. During a tornado drill, each classroom has an allocated shelter area which they need to get to quietly and safely as well. Specific escape and shelter routes are posted in each room. Please familiarize yourself and your students with the various routes of each room you teach in.

During a **fire drill**, teachers should see that:
1. Everyone is out of the room.
2. Doors and windows are closed and lights are out in each room.
3. Good order is maintained during evacuation.
4. There is no running.
5. Students do not stop to pick up books, coats, or other personal items.
6. Students move at least 200 feet from the building after evacuation.
7. No one returns to the building until notified to do so by the principal or another teacher.

During a **tornado drill**, teachers should see that:
1. Everyone goes to their designated shelter space.
2. Everyone gets down under a table or other sturdy object.
3. Everyone stays sheltered until given the OK to leave by the principal or another teacher.

GENERAL BEHAVIORAL POLICIES DURING AND AFTER SCHOOL

A. Outdoor Rules
   1. The west side of the school is off limits.
   2. No playing in traffic areas or near the highway.
   3. Stay clear of outdoor school equipment (electrical boxes, etc.).
   4. No tackle football.
   5. No baseball.
   6. No food with wrappers outside.
   7. No snowballs or face washes.
   8. Students may not climb on the fence.

B. Gym Rules

1. Use the front doors as the only entrance.
2. No snacks in the gym.
3. Basketball shots must be within one third the length of the gym. (No baseball throws)
4. No football playing in the gym.
5. No frisbee playing in the gym.
6. Equipment may only be used the way it was designed to be used.
7. Equipment must be returned to its proper place on the recess cart.
8. Students may not go in or on any of the storage areas.
9. Gym shoes or no shoes must be worn in the gym.
10. No hanging on basketball rims or nets.

C. General Behavior Rules for School

1. No running in the hallways.
2. No loud talking in the hallways or entryways.
3. Students must be seated while eating.
4. Stay to the right in hallways, etc.
5. After school students will wait in the foyer for pickup.
6. Students are to respect all other students and all teachers.
7. Students must respect the property of all other students, including their desks, pencils, etc.
8. Students should bring all the supplies from home that they are requested to bring.
9. Profanity and barnyard slang may not be used.
10. Students may not have “nuisance” items at school. The teachers and administrator will determine what is considered a nuisance.
11. Lining up to enter school is very important. We insist that students are quiet when lining up. The students then hopefully carry that quietness into the classrooms.
12. Caps, headgear, and sunglasses are not to be worn in school.
13. Students must have permission of a teacher in order to use the telephone.

D. Chapel Behavior Rules for Students

1. Please keep feet off the chair in front of you.
2. Please sit up and pay attention.
3. Please do not disrupt our students’ worship time.

E. Class Trips

1. In cars and vans, all students must wear a seat belt.
2. Be courteous to the driver and fellow passengers.
3. Respect each driver/chaperone and honor his/her guidelines for safety.

GRADING SCALE

The following scale will be used by DCS. (Board Action: March, 2016).

A	100-95	C-	74-73
A-	94-93	D+	72-71
B+	92-91	D	70-65
B	90-85	D-	64-63
B-	84-83	F	62-0
C+	82-81	I	Incomplete
C	80-75		

HALL, GYM, and PARKING LOT DUTY

A safe, wholesome, and generally Christ-like model of behavior should be enforced in the hallways and gym at all times. Teachers will be encouraged to monitor hallways before and after school and between classes. Assigned personnel must be present in the gym during break and noon hour or must find another teacher to substitute. In addition to an ethical responsibility, we have a legal standard of care for students, which require monitoring of hallway and gym behavior. All faculty not assigned to monitoring duty should try to aid in this process also. Be where the action is. This includes the school parking lot. Students should use the designated crosswalk at the front of the school upon exiting after school for safety purposes.

HOMEWORK

It is difficult for all course requirements to be fulfilled during class periods. Have a definite purpose for each assignment. Avoid "busy work" for the mere sake of it. All homework should be meaningful and applicable.

Careless class work should not be accepted. Some standards for student written work would include:

1. Daily assignments to be turned in must be completed as neatly as possible. Answers must be clearly visible and cross-outs kept to a minimum.
2. Formal work (such as book reports, lab reports, and other papers) must be typed (unless you inform your students otherwise), double-spaced, with margins, titles, and other information included as directed by you, the teacher. Spelling, sentence structure, and grammar must demonstrate clarity and carefulness, depending on your specific instructions.
3. All handwritten work on assignments, quizzes, and tests must be legible. Any answers that cannot be deciphered will be marked incorrect.
4. The bottom line: The students' work reflects their values. They should take pride in their work and this pride should show through their work.

HEARTLAND CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS' CONVENTION ATTENDANCE AND REIMBURSEMENTS

Full time, contracted, salaried teachers are expected to attend the Heartland Teacher's Convention held in Sioux Center, Iowa, the first Thursday and Friday in October. Part-time teachers are expected to attend one day but are encouraged to attend both days. Exceptions can be granted by the administrator. Teachers will be reimbursed at the following rate: $75 for mileage, $45 per day of attendance. Also, the board will pay the rate of one noon lunch in the Dordt College Commons for all attendees.

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

All of us need to improve our quality and effectiveness of classroom instruction. To this end, several activities may be utilized. First, there is self-appraisal, that is to say a teacher must know her/himself. A written instrument or video may provide this analysis. Second, student and/or parent evaluation forms may be utilized. Third, at a minimum, the administrator will observe your teaching performance annually (semi-annually, if new). Teaching traits which seem especially effective are: 1) enjoyment of teaching; 2) unpredictability, i.e. change in classroom is expected and produced; 3) expression of positive feelings toward problem and non-problem students alike; and 4) a desire for colleague and administrative support. To a great extent, success or failure in our school is determined by what you do with students in and out of the classroom. Therefore, instructional improvement plays a key role in our mission.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The Board makes the final decision for textbooks after receiving a recommendation from the administrator and Education Committee. Other materials are approved through the administrator.

INTRUDER PROCEDURE

A. Unwelcome or out of control Intruder

Situations can occur in which an individual may display angry or confrontational behavior, which appears threatening. If this occurs, remain calm, call for help and try to defuse the situation by:

1. Ask the individual to go with you to the main office.
2. If the person will not go with you, send someone or use the phone to get help. Do not physically try to remove the individual.
3. Ask the person to leave the grounds and if they refuse, call the police.
4. Be sure the Administrator is aware of the event and file a report.
5. Do not ever attempt to remove a weapon from a violent individual. Ask them to put it away.

B. Dangerous Intruder

A dangerous individual is defined as one with a gun or knife or who threatens violence. Do not ever attempt to remove a weapon from a violent individual. Ask them to put it away. Prevent initiated violence by doing the following:

1. Remember the safety of students and staff is paramount.
2. Notify the Administrator.
3. Call 911.
4. All students and staff will move into the nearest classroom or room of safety which can be locked.
5. Outside doors will be locked if the person is not in the building.

6. Make sure the doors are locked, lights are turned off and all windows are shaded. Everyone should get down on the floor in a safe location in the room
7. No one should be evacuated unless the assailant is in custody. Do not run from the scene.
8. If a crime occurs, the entire building is a crime scene. Once the building is evacuated, no one will be allowed inside except authorized personnel.
9. All media information is to be handled by the administrator.
10. Administrative staff will use cell phones to communicate with emergency personnel, etc.

LEAVING SCHOOL

Teachers must inform the office before leaving school during the school day.

LESSON PLANS

Each teacher is to keep lesson plans complete for the students and their own good. Have your lesson plans, roster, seating chart, and other pertinent information ready for a substitute teacher, when needed. Lessons plans will be given to the administrator as requested.

LIBRARY USE

The library is maintained for students and teachers to use. Please follow all checkout rules posted in the library and make sure that students do also. No magazines are allowed to be checked out of the library by students. Options are to take notes out of the magazines or get copies of articles made. Teachers, please encourage your students to read!

LOCKDOWN POLICY

Plan of action for use in lockdown:

1. If the administrator determines the need for a lockdown, the staff will be notified of the situation and the authorities will be contacted.
2. The administrator will use whichever means needed to inform the staff, probably through the intercom.
3. Teachers will be informed to shut windows and blinds, lock the classroom door, cover the windows on the doors, and have all students move to a section of the room that is hidden from view.
4. The administrator will lock all entry doors.
5. When the administrator determines that the lock down can be suspended, the notification will be announced over the intercom.

LUNCH

The period before lunch should close with a prayer of blessing and thanks for the coming meal. A scripture passage or devotional is also appropriate. Hot lunch and all other lunches will be eaten at the north end of the gym during lunchtime unless supervised by a staff member. Students should line up in an orderly fashion. Students may not cut in line and should be polite and respectful, as well as quietly sit and eat. Students will be expected to clean up any refuse of their lunch and place it in appropriate containers. Dispensed beverages may be purchased before and after school and at break (grades 7-12). Food, soda, juice, and sports drinks are not permitted in the gym (wooden floor). Classroom privileges for food and drink will be determined by the classroom teacher.

OPEN GYM POLICY

Often students wish to use the gym for recreational activities during the evening hours. At these times the gym will be open to anyone who wants to use it on a voluntary basis. A request for an open gym must be made at least 24 hours in advance to the office to determine gym availability and to announce the event to students. At ALL TIMES during the open gym there must be a member of the school staff present or a Board approved adult. The open gym supervisor must not coach. The time for the open gym session must be published and must not be an organized practice.

PARENT/PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL PERSONNEL

We believe that the following outline shows a biblical view of what the line of authority should be for a Christian school. It is what we follow.

School Board
|
Administrator
|
Secretary - Teacher - Custodian

Occasionally misunderstandings or problems may arise between staff members and students, teachers, and parents, or community members. Often the problem arises because of a lack of communication. The way to handle these problems is given to us in Matthew 18.

1. All questions, problems, or complaints should be brought directly to the staff member first before anyone else is involved.
2. If the situation is not cleared up through direct contact, it should then be brought to the administrator.
3. If the problem is still not resolved at this level, it should be presented in writing to the chairman of the board for assignment to the appropriate committee for consideration.
4. Only when all of the above steps have been taken does the problem find its way to the school board through written appeal from either the committee or the parent or teacher. It will then be placed on the agenda of the entire board at its regular monthly meeting.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are scheduled in the fall for all students and another in the spring for elementary students. All contracted, salaried faculty are required to attend during the designated time. We strongly encourage parental attendance; you may want to call parents and request their attendance.

Parent/teacher communication is beneficial for student achievement. In addition to these conferences, faculty should feel free to contact parents at any time to discuss their child. When this is done, the administrator should also be informed.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE CLASSROOM

Students should be in class and are required to have your permission to leave the classroom during class time.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

Good health is important to job performance. Employees shall submit to DCS, upon request, a report of a physical examination by a licensed physician. The school will reimburse personnel for the cost of the examination.

PLANNING PERIODS

Please use free time during the day, or before/after school to "run off" materials in the office and to prepare. You are expected to be in your classes when they are in session.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

No partisan political activity is permitted on the part of any school employee at any time during regular school hours.

POWER LOSS PROCEDURES

1. Stay calm, continue to teach if possible.
2. The power company will be contacted by the administration and a time estimate for repair determined.
3. If a school closing is necessary, it will be announced through School Messenger and necessary media.
4. Staff will ensure that all students have a means to arrive home safely and may not leave until all students have been appropriately cared for.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND RECORDS

All teachers are required to obtain and maintain a South Dakota Teaching Certificate and specific certification in their fields. South Dakota requires that teachers take 6 credit hours every five years for certificate renewal. DCS does reimburse teachers for classes taken as described in this handbook.

All certificates, necessary college transcripts, and other records of a professional nature are to be filed in the office by the administrator. All such records are considered confidential and for professional use only by the administrator and the school board. You may examine your professional file and discuss it with the administrator at any time.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Teachers should report any and all broken or damaged property to the custodian in order for repairs to be made.

PUNCTUALITY AND PRESENCE

You are expected to be in the classroom when the tardy bell rings and to remain there until the class is

dismissed. You should not leave a classroom unattended while students are in class.

REPORT CARDS

Each semester is divided into two 9-week periods. The schedule for these periods, and dates when your grades are due, can be found on the school calendar.

Report cards are sent out at the end of each semester to parents of Preschool-12 students. Parents can view their child/ren's report cards and progress reports online via our Educate program.

In addition, individual teachers should send out progress reports whenever there is a change seen in performance or behavior. This should be done whether the change is positive or negative. Forms for such reports are available in the office.

Restraint and Seclusion

The use of seclusion or restraint will be avoided unless employed to prevent immediate harm to the person or others. Seclusion or restraint may not be employed as punishment or for the convenience of staff. When restraint or seclusion is used to respond to the danger of harm, the intervention shall be discontinued as soon as the danger of harm has dissipated.

A written report including a justification for the use of seclusion or restraint shall be prepared and included in the person's record when the procedure is implemented. Parents will be called as soon as possible and a written report will be sent to them, both done not more than twenty-four hours after implementation of the procedure.

Seclusion or restraint may not be used in a manner that causes undue physical discomfort, harm, or pain to the person. No technique shall restrict a student's breathing or deprive them of basic needs. Appropriate attention shall be paid to a person in seclusion or restraint, and they will be monitored.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Your base salary will be set by the school board at the time your annual contract is drawn up. All administrators and contracted, salaried teachers will also receive the following benefits beyond their salary:

1. Payment by the board of appropriate Social Security taxes.
2. Reimbursement for continuing education courses. Dakota Christian School will reimburse teachers for a maximum of nine credit hours (not to accumulate) of college coursework per year. The school will pay teachers at a rate of $**200** per undergraduate hour and **$220** per graduate hour, plus up to $200 for related instructional supplies; however, advance board or administrative approval is required. All credits must be applicable to the particular grade level or subject area in which the teacher is teaching, or be applicable to an on-going approved program of study. (The two SD required courses will be reimbursed fully.)
3. Four personal days and eight sick days per year are given. Personal days accumulate to six working days (Board Action, January, 2019) and sick days accumulate to 25 working days. An additional five days of paid leave will be given for maternity leave if the entirety of the maternity leave is during the school year (Board action, January, 2016). Personal and sick days may be used for the purposes of extended sick leave for all staff. Both short term and long term disability policies are designed to provide a certain degree of income protection if a participant is unable to work. No salary/wages will be paid by DCS while the employee is receiving payments under either program. When these disability policies do not apply and when sick days are used up, teachers will be charged based on daily pay based on the number of contracted days. For example, if Teacher A has a contract at $30,000 with an expectation of 182 contact days in the school calendar, that teacher would make $30,000 / 182 = $164.84 / day. Teacher A gets deducted that much per day for missing days above allotted contract days (or $20.61 per hour if less than a full day). (Board action, August, 2015). Personal days cannot be used to extend a vacation without prior approval from administration.
4. Bereavement leave of three days may be requested for immediate family (spouse, child, parent, sibling, and grandparent). In case of death of any other relative or close friend, one day of absence per school year shall be allowed without loss of pay or sick leave, subject to prior approval by the administrator. Faculty members will be allowed bereavement days for non-family members, but faculty members will have to pay for their substitute.
5. Pro-rated Benefits for contracted, salaried instructors employed for at least 50% time:

a. Simple IRA contribution match up to 3% of salary.
b. 25% tuition reduction to full time teachers or administrator; and pro-rated tuition reduction to part time teachers based on contact time.

All administrators and full-time teachers will also receive:

1. Payment up to $500/month for school's group medical insurance for employee only; includes life insurance but no dental insurance.
2. Reimbursement up to $1,000.00 for all new certified personnel for moving expenses is provided. Should the new personnel discontinue employment after one year, 1/2 of the reimbursement amount will be withheld from their final paycheck(s).

All part-time salaried staff are also eligible to purchase health insurance through the DCS health insurance plan at their own cost with the following provisions:

1. If the employee chooses to pay for their plan as a salary deduction, the cost of the premium cannot exceed their salary.
2. Should the cost of the insurance plan exceed their salary, all of the premium must be debited directly from their personal bank account.
3. Any fees related to setting up or maintaining the policy funding are to be paid by the employee.

A faculty Salary Negotiation Team will meet with the finance committee of the school board in January to present requests regarding salaries and benefits.

SCHEDULING OF ACTIVITIES

Scheduling of all school-sponsored activities is to be cleared with the administrator. A school calendar is maintained in the office. Please do not write on the calendar yourself; leave this to the secretary and/or administrator.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER VISITS

The Board of Education conscientiously strives to provide quality Christian education for Dakota Christian School students. Each month, one board member will visit the school. Feel free to talk with the board members when they visit informally. Tell them about your goals, objectives, methods, and also of your needs as a teacher. The primary reason for their visit is to learn more about Christian education at DCS--not to evaluate your performance. Formal evaluation is primarily a task of the administrator.

SCHOOL EQUIPMENT USE

No school equipment should be removed from the building. Requests, however, may be made to the administrator. When using school equipment, return it to its proper location.

SEMESTER EXAMS/PROJECTS

Semester exams or projects will be given in all courses of all students in Grades 7 – 12. The teacher and administrator may decide that in certain classes an exam would not be of value to the students. Semester exams or projects will count for 20% of the semester grade for grades 9 – 12, and 5% of the grade for grades 7-8.

High school students may exempt one exam per semester if they have met the follow criteria in that class:

1. An A in the class at the end of the semester
2. Five or fewer absences in the class period

During second semester exams, seniors will have the option of opting out of every exam in which they meet the above criteria.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Sexual harassment of students by other students or by employees of DCS is unlawful and contrary to our religious beliefs and the commitment of this school to provide a stable learning and working environment. School authorities will not tolerate any sexual harassment of students. It is the policy of this school that all contact between students, teachers, and other adult employees be in keeping with respect for the individual student, be of a nature that does not make a student feel uncomfortable, and be conducive to creating a stable environment.

Sexual harassment includes making unwelcome sexual advances, engaging in improper physical contact, making improper sexual comments, or otherwise creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment. All students and all school employees are expected to conduct themselves with respect for dignity of others.

If a teacher has experienced sexual harassment of any kind, or sees evidence of a student having been harassed, they need to report it immediately to the principal or counselor.

School authorities will investigate all such reports immediately. Civil authorities will handle criminal charges. Anyone found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school if they are a student, termination from employment if they are an employee, and/or criminally charged if charges are filed.

All such reports will be handled discreetly to maintain confidentiality in order to avoid embarrassment and to protect the teacher making the report.

SICK LEAVE BANK

1. To be eligible to participate in the Sick Leave Bank, each certified, full-time employee shall notify in writing the Business Manager within the first 2 weeks of the current school year. Employees who choose not to participate at this time will not be eligible for the current school year.
2. To become eligible each employee will contribute two days of sick leave the first year of participation. Participating employees can donate more sick days to the bank if so desired.
3. Part-time, salaried employees are eligible to participate in the sick leave bank. Days donated to the bank will be prorated according to percentage employed.
   a. Example: 50% teacher donates one day to the bank to participate.
4. In the second and subsequent years of participation, eligible employees will donate a minimum of one day of sick leave to the bank.
5. To be eligible to withdraw from the sick bank, all participating staff must have used all sick leave (current and accumulated) and personal leave (current and accumulated).
6. All requests for sick leave bank days will be handled by the Education Committee.
7. Eligible employees may request sick bank days from the Education Committee. Employees may request from one-half to ten days at one time. There is no limit to the number of requests an employee can make. If the administrator deems it necessary, the employee shall provide a doctor's note to the Education Committee.
8. For part-time, salaried employees allowable requests will be prorated according to percentage employed.
   a. Example: A 50% employee may request up to 5 days of sick time from the bank at once.
9. Participating employees should, whenever possible, request days in advance of leave.
10. Certified staff who become disabled or retire will not be entitled to any days from the sick leave bank.
11. Days contributed to the plan cannot be withdrawn when an employee terminates membership.
12. Staff who retire will be able to donate unused sick leave to the sick leave bank if they choose.
13. In January, the Education Committee will consider the number of days remaining the sick leave bank. If necessary, participating staff will have the option of donating additional days to the sick leave bank.
14. Parental Leave: The sick bank may be accessed for paternity and maternity leave. The window allowed for maternity leave begins on the child's date of birth and ends after six consecutive calendar weeks unless medical conditions require otherwise. The Education Committee may grant more than 10 days with one request in a maternity leave situation. Employees must use all available personal and sick days before accessing the bank.

SPORTSMANSHIP

It is the quality of honor that desires always to be fair, courteous, and respectful. It is interpreted in the conduct of players, spectators, coaches, and school employees. Teachers and coaches need to insist upon it from students and exemplify it themselves. Sports participants will be encouraged to display qualities of good sportsmanship following a Christ-like model in the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23).

STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

You are a member of a professional group; Christian ethics require that you do your share of the group's

work. Be on time to do your share at all times. Christian ethics also require that you do all you can to promote good general school morale. Share ideas with and give the benefit of your experience to less-experienced teachers.

Confront problems with colleagues sensitively and in person as per Matthew 18. Behind-the-back criticism of any fellow staff members, the principal, or students is unethical. Let's do all we can to build up the body of Christ. (I Corinthians 12).

STAFF ROOM

The staff room is provided to give teachers/staff space to work in or relax without student interruption. To ensure that this is the case, students are not allowed in the staff room unless absolutely necessary.

STAFF/STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Our staff members should show regard and respect for each student as an image-bearer of God and should accord them the rights due any individual. We should be resources, aides, and guides in the learning process -- not dictators or controllers. Treat students with courtesy and consideration. Do not use sarcasm or insults.

In turn, students should regard and respect staff members also as God's image-bearers. Students must respect the God-given authority of all staff members. Please insist upon it for yourself and do not tolerate disrespect from students toward other teachers or students themselves.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Students must follow the school dress code. Faculty are asked to help in enforcing this code. Students violating the code should be sent to the office as soon as identified, usually first hour.

Dress Code Specifics:

1) All clothing must be neat, clean, and appropriate for the classroom. Shirts must have sleeves
2) The following are not allowed:
    a. Shirts that do not cover bottom wear by 2-3 inches so that the midriff isn't exposed when raising arms;
    b. Clothing marked with slogans that detract from our Christian witness (examples: alcohol, cigarettes, sexual innuendo);
    c. Caps, hats, bandanas, or any other headgear during school hours;
    d. Sunglasses;
    e. Tank tops of any type, spaghetti-strapped-tops, tops with revealing scoop or V-necks, or open back;
    f. Dresses or skirts of immodest length; (Girls are to use Christian discernment & modesty; shorts – no more than 2 inches above the knee.)
    g. Shorts must be fingertip length.
    h. No visible body piercing that could cause harm to self, others, or the school environment.
    i. No lycra, spandex, or other form fitting bottoms unless your top meets the criteria for shorts (fingertip length)

Please evaluate student attire in each class period.

STUDENT MEDICATIONS

Aspirin or other medication may be distributed from the school office with parent permission only.

STUDENT PERMISSION TO LEAVE SCHOOL

Only the administrator or his/her authorized second may give students permission to leave the school grounds during the school day. This includes noon hour and all breaks. Sign out is made in the office.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Any student participating in an off campus, school sponsored event of any kind must ride on school provided transportation to and from the event. This may mean a bus, van, or an authorized and designated car pool. All drivers participating in a car pool (including teachers) are expected to obey all traffic regulations, including speed limits.

After the event, students may ride home with their parents if the person in charge of the event gives their permission to do so. Such permissions should be given in advance.

STUDY HALLS

Study periods are to be treated like a class. All class rules apply. All students should be monitored during study halls. With the administrator's approval, seniors may leave the building if they have open campus privileges or use the approved location for study hall; if remaining in the building, they must check in with the monitor of their study hall before going to the approved location.

SUPPLIES

Basic and routine supplies are stored in the office. Faculty may ask for what is needed for school use. If certain supplies needed are not in stock, please ask for them. If funds are available, items will be ordered.

TEACHER HOURS

All full-time contracted, salaried teachers are expected to be at work by 7:45 a.m. and may leave at 3:50 p.m. Part-time contracted, salaried teachers are expected to work at school for the percentage of time contracted and should arrive 15 minutes prior to those hours. Full-time, contracted teachers are expected to be at school at 7:30 for devotions and staff meeting on Monday; they may leave Friday afternoon at 3:35 p.m. to offset this time.

TEACHER ILLNESS/PERSONAL LEAVE

If you find it necessary to be absent because of illness or personal necessity, please notify the administrator as soon as possible so arrangements for substitutes can be made. Teachers are responsible for finding a substitute or class coverage prior to planned leave. A list of possible subs can be requested from the office. All personal leave days must be approved by the administrator in advance, except in cases of emergency. Teachers are required to schedule personal days before the month of May, exceptions can be made by the administrator

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING CLASSROOMS

Each classroom should be kept neat. Do not allow our students to leave a room in a messy condition at any time. Before dismissal, all excess paper should be picked up and disposed of in wastebaskets and all desks should be put in rows. No writing on desks, walls, or other school property is allowed and students who do such must be disciplined.

When you leave a classroom, whether during the day when it will not be used the next period, or at the end of the day, please turn out the lights. If you use the library or computer lab for a class, be certain all furniture is in its normal arrangement.

TELEPHONE

Unless it is an emergency neither teachers nor students will normally be called from their classroom to answer a telephone call. Teachers will be responsible to listen to phone messages on the phones in their rooms. They are encouraged to check at appropriate times during the day and especially prior to dismissal. Cell phones should only be used or checked for personal purposes during non-contact times with students.

SD CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR TEACHERS

24:08:03:01. Obligations to students.

In fulfilling their obligations to the students, educators shall act as follows:

(1) Not, without just cause, restrain students from independent action in their pursuit of learning;
(2) Not, without just cause, deny to the students access to varying points of view in the classroom;
(3) Present subject matter for which they bear responsibility without deliberate suppression or distortion;
(4) Make a reasonable effort to maintain discipline and order in the classroom and the school system to protect the students from the conditions harmful to learning, physical and emotional well-being, health, and safety;

(5) Conduct professional business in such a way that they do not expose the students to unnecessary intimidation, embarrassment, or disparagement;
(6) Accord just and equitable treatment to every student, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, sexual preference, age, marital status, handicapping condition, national origin, or ethnic background;
(7) Maintain professional relationships with students without exploitation of a student for personal gain or advantage;
(8) Keep in confidence information that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law; and
(9) Maintain professional relationships with students in a manner which is free of vindictiveness, recrimination, and harassment.
(10) Not engage in or be a party to any sexual activity with students including sexual intercourse, sexual contact, sexual photography, or illicit sexual communication.

24:08:03:02. Obligations to the Public.
In fulfilling their obligations to the public, educators shall act as follows:
(1) Take precautions to distinguish between their personal views and those of the local school district or governing board;
(2) Not knowingly distort or misrepresent the facts concerning educational matters in direct and indirect public expressions;
(3) Not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities;
(4) Not exploit the local school district or governing body for public or personal gain;
(5) Not exploit the local school district or governing body to promote political candidates or partisan political activities.
(6) Neither accepts nor offers any gratuities, gifts, services, or things of value that impair professional judgment, offer special advantage or provide personal benefit;
(7) Engage in no act that results in a conviction;
(8) Exemplify high moral standards by not engaging in or becoming a party to such activities as fraud, embezzlement, theft, deceit, moral turpitude, gross immorality, sexual contact with students, illegal drugs, or use of misleading or false statements; and
(9) Not misuse or abuse school equipment or property.

24:08:03:03. Obligations to the Profession.
In fulfilling their obligations to the profession, educators shall act as follows:
(1) Accord just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession in the exercise of their professional rights and responsibilities;
(2) Maintain confidentiality of professional information acquired about colleagues in the course of employment, unless disclosure serves professional purposes;
(3) Discuss professional matters concerning colleagues in a professional manner;
(4) Accept a position or responsibility only on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications;
(5) Adhere to the terms of a contract or appointment unless the contract has been altered without the consent of the affected parties, except as provided by law, legally terminated, or legally voided;
(6) Use sound professional judgment in delegating professional responsibilities to others;
(7) Not interfere with the free participation of colleagues in the affairs of their associations;
(8) Not use coercive or threatening means in order to influence professional decisions of colleagues;
(9) Not knowingly misrepresent their professional qualifications;
(10) Not knowingly distort evaluation of colleagues;
(11) Not criticize a colleague before students, except as unavoidably related to an administrative or judicial proceeding.
(12) Cooperate with authorities and the commissions regarding violations of the codes of ethics of the South Dakota Professional Teachers Practices and Standards Commission and the Professional Administrators Practices and Standards Commission;
(13) Perform duties in accordance with local, state, and federal rules and laws.

JOINT POSITION STATEMENT ON ETHICAL JOB SEARCH PRACTICES

The members of the Professional Teachers Practices and Standards Commission and the Professional Administrators Practices and Standards Commission encourage the growth and professional advancement of all certified educators. The recommended ethical criteria for job search are:

1. Prior to signing the contract, the teacher or administrator is free to look for other employment.
2. After a contract has been signed for the upcoming school year and other employment is being sought, at the point of interview the present administrator and/or board needs to be informed of the job search.
3. After a contract has been signed for the upcoming school year and other employment is being sought, at the point of interview the prospective administrator and/or board needs to be informed of the existing contract.