



Presented for Board Approval: September 19, 2024

Mandated Board Policies

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SAFE AND SECURE SCHOOLS

- I. The VPrep Academy of Florida Board of Directors has as its first obligation to provide a safe, secure, and orderly learning environment for students, school personnel, and other persons.
- II. An orderly environment can only be achieved by developing procedures to control students, personnel, and other persons attending school sponsored events or activities and at the school property. All procedures shall reflect the following policy provisions:
 - A. Office entrance doors shall be locked at all times.
 - B. A student who is suspended or expelled is not in good standing and is not permitted at the school office or any school sponsored event.
 - C. Any person at the school property or at a school sponsored event/activities not in accordance with this policy is hereby declared to be a trespasser and shall be asked to leave immediately by any staff member. The principal and/or operations manager shall keep a log of such incidents which shall provide the name of the person asked to leave and other pertinent information. If said person shall again be seen at the school office or school-sponsored event, any staff member shall immediately notify the principal or appropriate local law enforcement officials without further warning.
 - D. Individuals who enter the school office/property or show at a school-sponsored activity without a legitimate reason and create a disturbance or refuse to leave the property or activity when asked by the Head of School or designee, principal or person in charge are subject to criminal penalty as provided in Florida Statutes. The person in charge shall contact appropriate law enforcement officials in cases of disruptive activity or refusal to leave the school property or activity and take appropriate actions to have the offender punished as prescribed by law. The Head of School shall be notified of any such action.
 - E. Pursuant to Section 843.08 – False personation and Section 921.0022 – Criminal Punishment Code, Florida Statutes, false personation of a school security officer or school guardian is prohibited, and criminal penalties apply.



III. The following emergency response agency(ies) shall notify the School District in the event of an emergency:

Emergency Response Agency	Type of Emergency
Osceola County Sheriff's Office	All pertinent emergencies per state law within its legal jurisdiction
Kissimmee Police Department	All pertinent emergencies per state law within its legal jurisdiction

IV. Safety, Security, and Emergency Plans

- A. As applicable for a virtual school, the Head of School shall develop a School Safety and Security Plan with input from the principal; School Resource Officer(s); representatives of the local law enforcement agencies; the local Fire Marshall(s); representative(s) from emergency medical services; representative(s) from the local emergency management agency; and/ or representative(s) of the Osceola County Health Department.
- B. As required by state law, the Head of School shall comply with the use of the Florida Safe School Assessment Tool (FSSAT) to conduct a self-assessment of the School District's current safety and security practices by October 1 of each year.
- C. Upon completion of these self-assessments and applying our virtual school setting, the Head of School shall convene a safety and security review meeting for the purpose of:
- reviewing the current School Safety and Security Plan and the results of the self-assessment;
 - identifying necessary modifications to the plan;
 - identifying additional necessary training for staff and students; and
 - discussing any other related matters deemed necessary by the meeting participants.
- D. Emergency management and preparedness plans shall include notification procedures for weapon use and active assailant/ hostage situations, hazardous materials and toxic



chemical spills, weather emergencies, and exposure resulting from a manmade emergency.

- E. Emergency management and preparedness procedures for active assailant situations at state testing sites shall engage the participation of the School District School Safety Specialist, threat assessment team members, and staff.
- F. Copies of plans shall be provided to county and city law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and emergency preparedness officials upon request.

V. Threat Assessment

- A. The primary purpose of threat management is to identify individuals exhibiting threatening or other concerning behavior, assess the risk of harm, and coordinate appropriate interventions and services for such individuals. The Board's threat management process is a systematic, fact-based method designed to identify, using threat assessment protocols, whether behaviors or communications constitute a concern for violence or harm to another person. Florida Harm Prevention and Threat Management Model is designed to identify, assess, manage, and monitor threats to schools, school staff and students. The goal of the threat management process is to prevent violence or harm to members of the school community. The threat management process uses a methodology that identifies students exhibiting threatening or other concerning behavior, gathers information to assess the risk of harm to themselves or others, and identifies appropriate interventions to prevent violence and promote successful outcomes.
- B. The Board authorizes the Head of School to designate a Threat Management Team. Each team shall consist of four (4) individual members; shall be headed by an administrator who is the school principal's designee; shall include a person with expertise in counseling (school/ psychological), instructional personnel, and law enforcement (School Resource Officer); and shall provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self. All members of the threat assessment team must be involved in the threat assessment process and final decision making. The school principal shall not be a voting member of the team. However, the school principal shall oversee the team and the process and review each team's decisions for fidelity, accuracy, and completion.



A School Based Threat Management Team (SBTMT) shall be chaired by the Principal and a Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair shall only act when the Principal is not available.

- a. The Principal serves as the point person for threat management at the school-level and is responsible for triaging reported threats or concerning behavior and communications to determine whether the matter should be summarily closed, or whether it should be reviewed further.
- b. The team shall be comprised of a minimum of four (4) members, including a person with expertise in counseling (school/ psychological), instructional personnel, school administration, and law enforcement (school resource officer).
- c. If none of the SBTMT members are familiar with the student of concern, the SBTMT Chair shall assign a member of the school's staff who is familiar with the student to consult with and provide background information to the threat management team. Consulting personnel do not have to complete Florida Model training and may not participate in the decision-making process. However, the consulting person must be a member of the instructional staff or administrative staff at the school. If the student is new, and no one is familiar with the student, then the school shall make a reasonable effort to contact the previous school.
- d. All members of the threat management team must be involved in the threat management process and final decision making.
- e. Parental Notification
 - i. If the SBTMT Chair determines the concerning threat or behavior reported is a low level of concern and summarily closes the case, the Chair/ designee must use reasonable efforts to notify the parent or guardian of the student concern on the same day the determination is made.



- ii. If the Chair does not summarily close the case and refers the matter to the SBTMT, reasonable efforts must be made to notify the student of concern's parent or guardian on the same day the SBTMT assigns the preliminary level of concern. The SBTMT must document all attempts to make contact with the parent or guardian using the contact information shared by the parent or guardian with the School District. The Chair shall also notify the parent of the target or victim on the same day the SBTMT assigns the preliminary level of concern.
 - iii. If the preliminary level of concern is high, the SBTMT chair or designee must notify the Head of School or designee to ensure the requirements of F.S. Stat. 1006.07 are met.
 - iv. The SBTMT Chair must notify the student of concern's parent or guardian if the threat management process reveals information about their student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or results in a change in related services or monitoring, including but not limited to implementation of a Student Support Management Plan (SSMP).
 - v. The SBTMT Chair or designee must provide a copy of the SSMP to the student of concern's parent or guardian upon the plan's finalization and anytime the SSMP is substantially revised.
 - vi. The SBTMT Chair must make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or guardian of the targeted student before the end of the school day that the report was received unless the Chair has determined the concern is unfounded. The SBTMT chair shall also inform the parent of the targeted student that an SSMP has been put in place.
2. The threat management team shall be responsible for the assessment of individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff and/or students; and the coordination of resources and interventions for the individual student.



3. If a student with a disability is reported to have made a threat to harm others, and the student's intent is not clear, then a referral shall be made to the threat management team for evaluation.
 4. Upon a preliminary determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to the student's self or others, the threat management team may obtain criminal history record information. The team must immediately report its determination to the Head of School or designee, and the Head of School or designee must immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian. A parent or guardian has the right to inspect and review the threat management reporting document. The team shall coordinate resources and interventions to engage behavioral and or mental health crisis resources when mental health or substance abuse crisis is suspected.
 5. The threat management team shall plan for the implementation and monitoring of appropriate interventions to manage or mitigate the student's risk for engaging in violence and increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes.
- C. Pursuant to Section 1001.212(12), Florida Statutes, threat management teams in all public schools, including charter schools, shall use the appropriate behavioral threat assessment instrument that is required in state law.
- D. Each threat management team shall:
1. meet as often as needed to fulfill its duties of assessing and intervening with persons whose behavior may pose a threat to school staff or students, but no less than monthly;
 2. maintain documentation of their meetings, including meeting dates and times, team members in attendance, cases discussed, and actions taken; and
 3. complete required reporting of the threat assessment team's activities during the previous school year [e.g., Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool (FSSAT)].

VI. Safety - Procedures



- A. Pursuant to *Sections 1006.07, F.S.*, the parent, as defined by state law, shall have the right to timely notification of threats, unlawful acts, and significant emergencies that occur during school-sponsored activities.
- B. Pursuant to *Section 1006.07, F.S.*, the parent, as defined by state law, shall have the right to access school safety and discipline incident reports.

VII. Safety – Best Practices

The Head of School or designee shall review and may implement safety and security best practices recommended by the Florida Department of Education as appropriate for a virtual school setting.

VIII. Security

- 1. Designate an administrator as the school safety specialist for the School
- 2. Establish policies and procedures for the prevention of violence at school sponsored activities, including assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of the school community; and
- 3. Establish and adhere to background screening procedures for all staff, volunteers, and mentors.

IX. Active Assailant Incidents

- A. Every employee is responsible for a level of safety in maintaining control and issuing guidance during an active assailant incident in order to limit serious injury and loss of life.
- B. All employees shall complete required trainings related to the School safety, security, and mental health procedures in order to comply with federal and state laws.



E. All employees shall comply with all safety and security policies and to complete School District procedures, trainings, and drills for workplace safety, supervision and care of students, prevention and preparedness for accidents, emergencies, and threats or acts of violence.

F. All employees, volunteers, and students shall report immediately any expressed threat(s) or behavior(s) that may represent a threat to the community, school, and/ or individual directly to a School/ site administrator or local law enforcement officer.

Employees, volunteers, and students shall communicate threats using means which include, but are not limited to, cell phone applications such as Fortify Florida, Keep Osceola Safe, etc.

School / site administrators and local law enforcement officers shall follow School and local law enforcement procedures respectively to report the alleged threat and then take appropriate follow up actions.

G. Making or relaying a false threat or threatening behavior may result in both legal and disciplinary consequences for employees or students.

H. Pursuant to State Board of Education Rules and School District procedures, all administrators and academic deans who are responsible for administering student discipline shall:

1. Complete *School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting* (SESIR) training within thirty (30) days of assignment to such a position; and
2. Report all SESIR incidents in an accurate and timely manner using the School District's student information system.
3. The Osceola Director of Safety, Security, and Emergency Management shall review the School District's timely and accurate submission of each school's SESIR report data to the Florida Department of Education.

XII. Mental Health

A. The School shall opt in to the mental health services provided by the School District of Osceola. The mental health coordinator shall serve as the primary contact for the



coordination, communication, and implementation of student mental health policies, procedures, responsibilities, and reporting.

- B. The mental health coordinator shall be responsible for:
1. working with the Office of Safe Schools;
 2. maintaining records and reports regarding student mental health as it relates to school safety and the mental health assistance allocation;
 3. facilitating the implementation of school district mental health policies relating to the respective duties and responsibilities
 4. coordinating the staffing and training of threat assessment teams with the school safety specialist, and facilitating referrals, to mental health services, as appropriate for students and their families;
 5. coordinating with the school safety specialist, the training and resources for students and school district staff relating to youth mental health awareness and assistance; and
 6. annually review of the district's policies and procedures related to student mental health for compliance with state law and alignment with current best practices and making recommendations, as needed, for amending said policies and procedures.



REPORTING CHILD ABUSE, ABANDONMENT, OR NEGLECT

I. Procedures for Reporting

A. All employees who know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is an abused, abandoned, or neglected child shall immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children & Families (DCF) Florida Abuse Hotline (1-800-96ABUSE, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). In addition to immediately reporting such knowledge or suspicion to the DCF Florida Abuse Hotline, all employees shall do the following:

1. Because an employee may be subject to criminal prosecution by law enforcement authorities if the employee fails to report suspected child abuse immediately to the DCF Child Abuse Hotline, it is essential that in order to protect the security of each employee who reports suspected or known child abuse, abandonment or neglect in accordance with Florida law and the requirements of this policy, the following procedures shall be followed. Each employee shall comply with the following procedures each time the employee has reasonable cause to suspect that child abuse, abandonment or neglect has occurred or may be occurring and reports to DCF and law enforcement as specified elsewhere in this Rule:

- a. If available and reasonably possible without violating the good order of the School, the employee shall obtain another employee to act as a witness to the fact that the employee is making a report of known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. However, if no employee is available to act as a witness or if the employee in seeking a witness would unreasonably delay the reporting or would unreasonably interfere with the work of the other employees or interrupt the provision of educational services by another employee, then under such circumstances the employee who has reason to suspect child abuse, abandonment or neglect will immediately report to DCF and law enforcement as specified elsewhere and shall do so without a witness. As the term is used herein, an appropriate *witness* will only be another employee of the School to ensure confidentiality of student information.
- b. It shall not be necessary for a witness to report himself or herself as that person's function will be limited strictly to that of being a witness to reporting in accordance with this policy. Additionally,



school/department administrators and the Head of School, and any other personnel who become aware of the fact that a School employee has reported suspected or known child abuse, abandonment or neglect, are not also required to report if their involvement in the matter is simply acting as a witness pursuant to this policy or in maintaining records or receiving reports of School employees making such reports pursuant to this policy.

- C. The reporting School employee shall promptly notify his or her school/department administrator (principal of a school or other person in charge) regarding the date and time on which the School employee determined that he or she had reasonable cause to suspect or know that a child was an abused, abandoned or neglected child and then reported such matter to the DCF Abuse Hotline, and in cases of employees, volunteers or agents of the School the report should also be made to local law enforcement. Each employee reporting known or suspected child abuse, abandonment or neglect shall record such report by completing the **Child Abuse and Incident Referral Report form**. The administrator will then use established procedures to report promptly this information to the Head of School.
2. If a complaint is made against a School employee, volunteer, agent, or other person affiliated with the School, which, if true, would constitute child abuse, neglect, or abandonment, or be a violation of law by that person, the Head of School or designee shall forward the complaint to DCF and law enforcement for investigation as provided by statute. The person accused of child abuse, abandonment or neglect may be suspended or reassigned from duties involving interaction with children pending investigation of the allegations. If the allegations are substantiated by the investigating agency, the Head of School/Management Company shall take appropriate disciplinary action. School staff shall in good faith cooperate with and participate only as directed by law enforcement during the investigation and with respect to any subsequent criminal proceedings.
 3. When a report of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment has been made to DCF, a teacher, staff member, volunteer, or agency should not take it upon himself or herself to interview the child, talk with the suspected abuser, discuss the allegations with other potential witnesses or otherwise discuss the case. Nor should a teacher, staff member, volunteer, or agent divulge information relating



to the complaint to persons other than school officials, the Child Protection Team, DCF, law enforcement, the State Attorney or other court designee. If a parent, caregiver or legal guardian desires information related to a complaint of child abuse, that person should be directed to contact DCF and/or the applicable local law enforcement agency.

II. School Operations Regarding Issues Involving Students and Personnel

- A. Nothing herein shall limit the right of the Head of School and staff to take appropriate steps, including interviewing all witnesses and possible witnesses, with regard to the investigation of personnel of the School for the purpose of determining whether any action has occurred which may require remediation of personnel practices, implementation of an improvement plan, comments to be made in an employee's evaluation or record, or discipline, suspension or termination of any personnel of the School.
- B. Nothing in this policy shall limit the authority of the Head of School and his/her staff to investigate all matters that may reasonably have a relationship to the safety or behaviors of students and personnel of the School, the control of students and personnel, and all of which matters are within the authority of the School. Such action may include as determined appropriate by the Head of School and staff the interviewing of witnesses, including students, as it relates to matters involving personnel of the School, student discipline, safety, and other matters related to the operations of the School.
- C. Any failure of the DCF or local law enforcement to promptly accept or respond to a report of suspected or known child abuse, abandonment or neglect shall be documented and reported to the Head of School for inclusion in the records of the Head of School regarding reporting of suspected or known child abuse, abandonment or neglect.

III. Liberal Interpretation of Duty to Report

In any circumstance in which the employee of the School has any question or doubt regarding whether he or she has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, abandonment or neglect, the employee must immediately report to DCF, and, in cases of employees, volunteers or agents of the School, local law enforcement, and must also report to his or her school/department administrator in the manner specified above in this policy. All doubt must be resolved in favor of reporting any situation involving alleged or suspected child abuse, abandonment or neglect. However, all such reports of possible or suspected or known child abuse, abandonment or



neglect must in all instances be made in good faith. No School employee shall report any matter when the employee believes that no child abuse, abandonment or neglect is occurring or has occurred, or where such report is being made maliciously or in bad faith.

IV. Definitions

The following terms shall have the definitions herein prescribed:

- A. *Child Abuse* shall mean any willful act or threatened act or omission to act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual injury or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired. Corporal discipline of a child by a parent or legal custodian for disciplinary purposes does not in itself constitute abuse when it does not result in harm to the child.

- B. *Abandonment* or *Abandoned* shall mean a situation in which the parent or legal custodian of a child or, in the absence of a parent or legal custodian, the care-giver responsible for the child's welfare, while being able, makes no provision for the child's support and makes no effort to communicate with the child, which situation is sufficient to evince a willful rejection of parental obligations. If the efforts of such parent or legal custodian or care-giver primarily responsible for the child's welfare to support and communicate with the child are only marginal efforts that do not evince a settled purpose to assume all parental duties, then under any of these circumstances the child may be determined to be abandoned.

- C. *Neglect* shall mean that a child is deprived of or is allowed to be deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter or medical treatment or that a child is permitted to live in an environment when such deprivation or environment causes the child's physical, mental or emotional health to be significantly impaired or to be in danger of being significantly impaired.

- D. As specified in Section 39.01(30) Florida Statutes, in determining whether harm has occurred to a child such that the child may be deemed abused, neglected or abandoned, as the case may be, the following factors and definitions shall apply. *Harm* occurs when any person inflicts on, or by omission causes, a child (or there is reasonable cause to suspect such infliction):



1. Any action that produces, or willful or conscious omission that allows, injuries such as sprains, dislocations, cartilage damage, fractures of bone or skull, brain or spinal cord damage, hemorrhaging inside the person's head or injury to other internal organs, asphyxiation, suffocation or drowning, injury resulting from the use of a weapon, burns or scalding, cuts, lacerations, punctures or bites, permanent or temporary disfigurement and permanent or temporary loss or impairment of a body part or function
2. Giving, or willfully or consciously allowing, a child poison, alcohol, drugs or other substances that substantially affect the child's behavior, motor coordination or judgment or that result in sickness or internal injury. The term *drugs* as used herein includes prescription drugs not specifically prescribed for the child or administered in a manner other than as prescribed, unlawful or controlled substances, and over the counter medications or other substances of any type whatsoever that are given to the child for use in a manner that is harmful to the child or for use in a manner other than as intended or specified for the particular product or substance.
3. Leaving a child without adult supervision or arrangement appropriate for the child's age or mental or physical condition so that the child is unable to care for his or her own needs or another's basic needs or is unable to exercise good judgment in responding to any kind of physical or emotional crisis.
4. Excessively harsh disciplinary action likely to result in physical or mental injury. Discipline from a parent or care-giver may be considered excessive or abusive when it results in any of the types of injuries specified in section V.D.1., and/ or results in significant bruises or welts.
5. Any sexual battery, sexual conduct, lewd or lascivious acts or sexual exploitation of a child. Sexual exploitation includes prostitution, sexual performance, or any other sexual act. Any sexual act involving a child must be reported if the School employee has any reasonable cause to believe that such sexual act has occurred or knows such a thing to have occurred.

V. Confidentiality Regarding Student Identifying Information



All communications, reports and records created, maintained and recorded in accordance with this policy shall be maintained as confidential and shall be deemed to be student records and reports subject to confidentiality as specified in Section 1002.22, Florida Statutes.

VI. Equity

It is a violation of law and policy for any employee of the School to take any action or omit to take an action that results in harm or abuse to a student. The employees of the School are directed to be familiar with the School policies and to refrain from taking any action or omit to take any action which would constitute abuse, abandonment or neglect of a student.

VII. Penalty for Violation

Any employee failing to fully comply with this procedure shall be subject to discipline, including termination from employment. Additionally, a violation of Florida law regarding actions that may be abusive, harmful or neglectful of students, or a failure to immediately report suspected abuse, abandonment or neglect, may result in the imposition of criminal penalties by law enforcement authorities.

VIII. Notification of Responsibility

- A. A notice providing the following information shall be posted in a prominent place in a clearly visible location in the school office and posted virtually in school newsletters:
1. A statement: "All employees have the responsibility to report all actual and suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment or neglect; and shall comply with child protective investigations and all other provisions of law related to child abuse, abandonment or neglect. The reporting School District employee will be immune from liability if he or she reports such cases in good faith.
 2. Statewide toll-free telephone number for the central abuse hotline.
 3. Instructions for calling 911 for emergencies.
 4. Directions for accessing the DCF website for additional information on reporting abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- B. The message will be posted on the school's website with the policies and procedures for reporting alleged misconduct by an instructional employee or school administrator which affects the health, safety or welfare of a student. The notice shall include the person to whom the misconduct should be reported and the penalties that will be imposed on instructional or school administrative staff who fail to report alleged or actual child abuse or misconduct.



DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM

- I. The Head of School or designee shall develop a Dropout Prevention Plan pursuant to Florida Statutes. The Dropout Prevention Program will be incorporated through the *Student Progression Plan*.

- II. The student's parent or guardian has the right to receive written notice by certified mail or other method agreed to by the parent before placement of the student in a dropout prevention and academic intervention program and shall be notified in writing and entitled to an administrative review of any action by school personnel relating to the student's placement in the intervention program.



STUDENT CONTROL and Code of Conduct

All students enrolled in school shall be subject to federal and state laws, regulations of the State Board of Education, the rules and policies of the Board and the *Code of Student Conduct*, and shall be under the control and direction of the principal or designee during the time they are transported to or from school at public expense, during the time they are attending school or a school-sponsored activity, and during the time they are attending school authorized activities.

- I. The principal or the principal's designated representative shall see that students are properly supervised while at school and during any school-sponsored activity.
- II. Staff shall assume such authority for the control and supervision of students as may be assigned by the principal or the principal's designated representative and shall keep good order in places where in charge of students.
 - A. Upon knowledge, the teacher or paraprofessional employee to whom a student is assigned shall notify his or her supervising administrator immediately when a student, who is assigned to the teacher or paraprofessional employee, elopes off school property during the school day.
- III. The *Code of Student Conduct* is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of this Rule. The *Code of Student Conduct* and any revisions shall be approved and adopted by the Board. The *Code of Student Conduct* shall
 - A. Be developed with input from Board members, teachers, school personnel, school administrators, students, and parents, as defined by Florida Statutes.
 - B. State grounds for disciplinary action procedures and the rights of students.
 - C. Be distributed to all teachers, school personnel, students, and students' parent(s) at the beginning of each school year or upon enrollment.
 - D. Be filed in the office of the school principal.



- IV. The *Code of Student Conduct* shall be discussed with teachers, students and parents at the beginning of each year. Students who enroll after the beginning of the school year shall be given an orientation to the *Code of Student Conduct* upon enrollment.
- V. The principal shall use the *Code of Student Conduct* to familiarize students with School Board rules relating to students' rights, responsibilities, and conduct at the beginning of each school year and whenever he/she deems it necessary.