

# Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field

**Code of Conduct Committee:** Dr. Jared Androzzi, Dr. Dawne Burke, Dr. David Gonzol, Dr. Becky Mercado, Dr. Lynne Hannah, and the Educator Preparation Program Council.

\* *“Teacher Candidate (TC)”* refers to the prospective teacher enrolled at Shepherd University.

\* *“Student”* refers to any student enrolled in the Pk-12 school environment.

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## **I. Introduction to the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates for Teacher Candidates in the Field**

### **A. Mission Statement**

The Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates (TCs) in the Field has been developed to aid TCs in their professional development during field placements. The School of Education at Shepherd University holds its TCs to the highest standards with the mission to foster prospective teachers that inherently display professionalism in all teaching and learning environments. As part of their growth and advancement throughout their academic career, TCs will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in a number of diverse public school settings with the ultimate goal of harnessing these experiences so they may best serve their future students' educational needs. The term "opportunity" has been utilized in this mission statement to help TCs understand and appreciate their opportunities to improve their teaching skills in real teaching and learning environments.

### **B. Integration of the Teacher as a Reflective Problem Solver**

The "Teacher as a Reflective Problem Solver" is an integral component of the "Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field." While all elements of the "Teacher as Reflective Problem Solver" are vital to the professional development of the TC, those that are particularly worthy of noting in this Code of Conduct are standards 2, 3, 4, and 12, respectively. These standards are referenced due to the fact that they address the philosophy that TCs should continuously reflect on their professional dispositions throughout their entire academic and in-service career. As stated in the "Teacher as a Reflective Problem Solver" model, responsible TCs are those who:

- "Commit to continuous reflective self-examination for personal and professional development"
- "Demonstrate leadership by functioning as a change agent who influences and improves the education of P-12 students, through scholarship, community action, and collaboration in educational settings"
- "Focus on the development of P-12 students' critical mindedness, problem-solving skills, self-motivation, cooperative social interaction, and commitment to excellent performance"
- "Consistently reflect on their knowledge base, dispositional orientations, and performance characteristics"

## **II. Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field**

All TCs are required to abide by the code provided in detail in the next sections. It is at the discretion of the course instructor to establish the expectations and requirements of the TC at the field placement. The Shepherd University course instructor reserves the right to supplement, in writing and with appropriate notice, the codes relative to the nature of the teaching and learning environment. Teacher Candidates are also required to abide by any additional criteria set by their cooperating teacher at the field placement and the school in which they are performing their field placement. The course instructor will inform the TCs which learning materials are permitted for use during field placement. As an overall guideline, TCs are required to dress as a professional educator.

## **A. Professional Dress Code**

No field placement site reassignments are done on the basis of school assignment or dress code compliance. The field placement dress code takes first precedence to the Shepherd University “Professional Dress Code” of the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field. If the field placement dress code does not address any of the components of the Shepherd University Dress Code these are the requirements:

**Skirt, Dresses, or Shorts Length:** When the TC is wearing a skirt, dress, or shorts, those items of clothing must rest no shorter than three inches above the knee. The slit of a skirt, dress, or shorts must come to no higher than three inches above the knee.

**Safety:** In some learning environments additional safety precautions may be required. In these instances TCs are required to abide by all safety measures at all times. These may include but are not limited to wearing a hard helmet or footwear that provides proper ankle support, etc.

**Footwear:** All footwear must cover the entire foot and toes. Therefore this prohibits wearing flip-flops, sandals, etc.

**Piercings:** Teacher Candidates are not permitted to wear gauge earrings or any other visible piercings other than one set of standard earrings.

**Tattoos:** Tattoos that depict racism, sexism, violence, sexual imagery, or obscene phrases, or are gang-related, or drug-related may not be visible.

**Hats:** Teacher Candidates are not permitted to wear any hats, sweatbands, bandanas, etc. The course instructor might allow the TC to wear a hat when outdoors.

**Jewelry:** Teacher Candidates are not permitted to wear jewelry that depicts racism, sexism, violence, sexual imagery, or obscene phrases, or are gang-related, or drug-related may not be visible.

**Clothing:** Teacher Candidates are not permitted to wear clothes that depict racism, sexism, violence, sexual imagery, gang-related, obscene phrases, or that are drug-related. Additionally, TCs are not permitted to wear any midriff-revealing clothes, jeans, T-shirts, sunglasses, hats, exposed undergarments, work uniforms, or worn-out clothes that have stains or holes, etc. Tops must rest no lower than 3 inches below the clavicle. Any clothing that distracts students’ learning is prohibited. The course instructor may make exceptions as needed that are in alignment with the school, county, or field placement policies. For example, the course instructor might allow the TC to wear sunglasses when outdoors.

## **B. Professionalism at Field Placement:**

Field placement is a privilege that the TC must respect. In consistency with the mission of the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field, TCs are to perceive field placements as a privilege and an opportunity to mature. Therefore their behavior will reflect an eager disposition to grow. Teacher candidates are to interact with everyone in a professional manner, including but not limited to students, the course instructor, cooperating teacher, faculty, staff, teachers, parents, etc. Vulgar communication, be it verbal or non-verbal, is a violation of the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates. In addition to everyone at the field placement, the TCs are required to

interact with students only in a professional teacher-student relationship. If a pre-existing relationship with anyone at the assigned school exists, it must be disclosed. Teacher candidates are not permitted to discuss or share students' personal information or behavior with anyone other than their course instructor, cooperating teacher, field placement coordinator, and school principal.

### **C. Arrival to and Departure From Field Placement**

The course instructor may determine the times the TCs are to arrive and depart from their field placement. Each field placement has unique signing-in and checking-out procedures. The TC is required to abide by these. All TCs must bring their Shepherd University ID and a driver's license to their field placement.

### **D. Use of Electronics**

Any electronic device that is not used to facilitate professional development or students' learning is strictly prohibited.

## **III. Request for Modification of Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field**

With respect to the TC's right to individuality, personal image and identity, religious beliefs, and/or special needs, all TCs are required to abide by the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field. Any TC that wishes to make a request for any adjustment to protocol must complete and submit the "Request for Modification of Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field" form to the instructor of the Shepherd University course in which the TC is placed in the field. This request must be submitted in writing no less than two weeks prior to entry into the field. The request will be reviewed by the Request for Modification subcommittee of the Educator Preparation Program Council. Accommodations associated with a special need will be coordinated through the Office of Disability Support Services. A request for a modification does not guarantee that a modification will be permitted, since the Shepherd University personnel reviewing the request reserve the right to deny any such modifications.

## **IV. Violation of Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field**

Any instance in which the TC has not abided by the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field is a violation of such. In situations in which the TC has not abided by any of the criteria in the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field, the course instructor may use discretion as to how any violations will be addressed. Possible outcomes, including but not limited to the following, might be: (1) verbal counselling, which may be documented, in a meeting of the course instructor and the TC, which may include the cooperating teacher or others as deemed appropriate by the course instructor, to discuss the violation and what steps must be taken by the TC to improve professionalism; (2) the development of a contractual agreement of remediation between the course instructor and student in which the course instructor sets forth criteria that would serve as evidence of improvement; (3) suspension from field placement until completion of a contractual agreement of remediation that shows evidence that the TC is prepared to re-enter field placement; (4) involuntary withdrawal from practicum; or (5) expulsion from the teacher education program.

### Letter of Agreement

By signing this "Letter of Agreement" I am confirming that I have read, wholly understand, and will abide by the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field. If I commit any infraction upon the Shepherd University Code of Conduct I understand that such may be reviewed by Shepherd University personnel who will address the matter accordingly in a timely, professional, and objective method. Possible repercussions that may result of any infringement or infringements could include but are not limited to meeting with the Shepherd University personnel to undergo a remedial plan prior to re-entering the field placement or expulsion from the respective course and/or teacher education program.

Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Name (signed): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Request for Modification of the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field**

This request must be submitted no less than two weeks prior to field placement to the Request for Modification subcommittee of the Educator Preparation Program Council. Accommodations associated with a special need will be coordinated through the Office of Disability Support Services and Request for Modification Subcommittee of the Educator Preparation Program Council. Please check any and all justifications you are seeking for any modification of the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field:

- Religious beliefs
- Special needs
- Other

Provide a brief, written rationale as to why you are making the request.

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By signing this “Request for Modification of the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field” document, I am confirming that I have read, wholly understand, and will abide by the Shepherd University Code of Conduct for Teacher Candidates in the Field regardless as to whether or not my request is approved or denied. I am also confirming that I wholly understand that the right to deny this request is reserved by the respective Shepherd University personnel that review my request.

Please sign and date:

Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Name (signed): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

This section is to be completed by the Request for Modification Subcommittee of the Educator Preparation Program Council.

Request for Modification: (circle one)    Granted            Denied

Provide a brief written rationale as to why this request has been granted or denied.

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Course Instructor’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_