

St. Mary's University

Code of Conduct for Pre-service Teachers

This policy applies to students enrolled in the St. Mary's University Bachelor of Education program. Like certified teachers, pre-service teachers are in a position of trust and influence as they serve the vulnerable sector of children and youth and as such, they are expected to conduct themselves with due regard to the honour, dignity, welfare, rights and best interests of students and the teaching profession both on and off campus, during course work, and in practicum settings.

Definitions

1. In this policy,
 - a. "Pre-service teacher" means a student enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program at St. Mary's University, Calgary.
 - b. "Cooperating teacher" means an in-service teacher who is the certified professional teacher responsible for the supervision and assessment of K-12 students and who is assigned to mentor and assess a pre-service teacher.
 - c. "Practicum Advisor" means a certified teacher employed by St. Mary's University to mentor and assess the pre-service teacher during the course of their practicum experience.
 - d. "student" means a K-12 student or a post-secondary student who may also be a pre-service teacher.
 - e. "All persons" means pre-service teachers, post-secondary students from St. Mary's University or other institutions, employees of St. Mary's University, employees of partnering school boards, K-12 students, parents, and visitors within schools.

Preamble

St. Mary's University *Code of Conduct for Pre-service Teachers* is an extension of the St. Mary's University Non-academic Misconduct Policy and Academic Misconduct Policy.

The conduct standards below describe the professional characteristics and behaviors pre-service teachers are expected to demonstrate while they are enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Program. Pre-service teachers shall comply with this code while representing St. Mary's University on and off campus, during course work, and in practicum settings.

The conduct standards below are the minimum standards of conduct for pre-service teachers but are not an exhaustive list of such standards.

This code of conduct for pre-service teachers is established in accordance with the expectations for certified teachers in the Government of Alberta *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders*. <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/code-of-professional-conduct-for-teachers-and-teacher-leaders>

Code of Conduct complaints for pre-service teachers will be reviewed by the Director of Practica and/or Area Chair of Education and will be investigated by the Dean of Education or delegate.

Investigations may also occur in collaboration with partnering school board teachers and teacher leaders such as Principals and Cooperating Teachers.

Any person may make a complaint pursuant to the *St. Mary's University Pre-service Teacher Code of Conduct* which may result in disciplinary action by St. Mary's University impacting a pre-service teacher's suitability to remain enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program.

Pre-service teacher conduct and competence are defined separately. This code does not apply for the purposes of determining teacher competence. The [Teaching Quality Standard](#) created by Alberta Education establishes professional development competence requirements for pre-service and in-service teachers.

This code applies to the conduct of an individual pre-service teacher.

The conduct of pre-service teachers, both on and off duty, bears directly on the community's perception of the ability of pre-service and in-service teachers to fulfill their unique position of trust and influence, as described in the *Education Act*. The conduct of pre-service teachers also bears directly on the community's perception of St. Mary's University and our values as a Catholic University.

Professional Conduct Requirements:

1 In relation to students

- a. The pre-service teacher shall respect the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to their age, ancestry, colour, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, mental disability, physical disability, place of origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or source of income, which are the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and with regard to rights as provided for in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It is the pre-service teacher's responsibility to be familiar with these legislations, which may change over time.
- b. The pre-service teacher shall ensure that during both on and off-campus course work with St. Mary's University and within the practicum experience the pre-service teacher is an active participant in creating a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. This expectation is in accordance with the legal framework for K-12 classrooms to be a "safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours" as set out by the Government of Alberta in the *Education Act*.
- c. The pre-service teacher shall conduct themselves on and off campus in a manner that does not intentionally contravene applicable
 - (i) Legislation, including:
 - a. Ministerial Order (#014/2024) Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools.
 - b. Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act.
 - (ii) Policies of Alberta Education.

- (iii) Policies of St. Mary's University, including:
 - a. Sexual & Gender Based Harassment and Violence Policy.
 - b. St. Mary's University Sexual Violence and Campus Integrity and Human Rights Policies.
- (iv) Policies of the school district hosting their practicum experience, including the school policy on personal mobile devices, social media use in schools and digital citizenship.
- d. The pre-service teacher shall not
 - (i) Intentionally harm or abuse another person verbally, psychologically or emotionally.
 - (ii) Harm or abuse another person physically or sexually.
 - (iii) Engage in conversation of a sexual nature with another pre-service teacher during on-campus course work, or a person at the practicum school or during any practicum school-related activities unless the conversation is within the legal framework of approved curriculum content and a certified teacher is also included in the conversation. The pre-service teacher will immediately re-direct any student-initiated conversation of a sexual nature, or any student behavior which is sexually suggestive. Furthermore, should a situation arise, the Pre-service Teacher will alert their course instructor, cooperating teacher, practicum advisor or principal immediately.
- e. The pre-service teacher shall not
 - (i) Intentionally engage in an illegal activity or other activities that may cause another person to be put at or to remain at risk of harm or abuse, or
 - (ii) Knowingly encourage or enable another person to engage in an illegal activity or other activities that may cause another person to be put at or to remain at risk of harm or abuse.
- f. The pre-service teacher shall not disclose information received about a student in confidence or in the course of performing the pre-service teacher's duties except
 - (i) As required by law, or
 - (ii) Where
 - (a) in consultation with the Cooperating Teacher or Principal, it would be in the best interests of the student to disclose the information, and
 - (b) the disclosure of the information is permitted by law.
- g. The pre-service teacher shall not
 - (i) Accept pay for tutoring a student in any subjects in which the pre-service teacher is responsible for giving classroom instruction to that student, but may provide

tutoring to other students not in the pre-service teacher's charge, subject to local school policy,

(ii) Take advantage of a practicum position to profit from the sale of goods or services to or for students in the pre-service teacher's charge, or

(iii) While in a position of authority, teach or lead in a manner that exploits the pre-service teacher's relationship with students for ideological advantage, material advantage or other advantage. "Ideological advantage" means perspectives taught to students in a biased manner with the intent to take advantage of a student's uninformed or under-informed opinions but does not include programs of study established by the government authority.

(iv) The pre-service teacher shall not form social relationships of a non-professional nature (including through social media) with K-12 students or the parents of K-12 students in the practicum school.

(v) The pre-service teacher must be supervised at all times by a certified teacher who may delegate specific and limited aspects of instructional activity to them.

2 In relation to parents of students the pre-service teacher shall

- a. Respect parents and be considerate of their circumstances.
- b. Treat information received from and about parents with discretion.
- c. Be respectful in communications with and about parents, and
- d. Not discuss other students except where the matters being discussed are relevant to their child and then only to the extent that, after consulting with the Cooperating Teacher, it is deemed necessary.

3 In relation to teaching colleagues, including St. Mary's University staff and faculty, other pre-service teachers, and K-12 school staff the pre-service teacher shall

- a. Not undermine the confidence of students in other teachers. This means that pre-service teachers shall not speak negatively about the teaching practices of others.
- b. Not criticize the professional competence or professional reputation of another teacher except in confidence when seeking support from the Practicum Advisor, Director of Practica or Dean of Education. If the pre-service teacher has a question about the teaching methods or professional judgement of a certified teacher, they must speak directly to that teacher. If the pre-service teacher has concerns about the safety or welfare of students they must raise those concerns to the Principal with the support of their Practicum Advisor. If the pre-service teacher has concerns about the professional judgement of a St. Mary's University faculty or staff person they must raise those concerns to the Director of Practica, Area Chair of Education or the Dean of Education.
- c. Not take any steps to pursue the discipline or dismissal of another pre-service teacher, teacher or teacher-leader because of animosity or for personal advantage.

4 In relation to the teaching profession, the pre-service teacher shall

- a. Behave in a manner that maintains the honour and dignity of the profession including:

- (i) Communicating verbally and in writing in a clear and respectful manner.
- (ii) Using only their StMU e-mail address for all written communications with their professors, Cooperating Teacher, and Practicum Advisor.
- (iii) Abiding by all attendance policies listed in course syllabi and the Practicum Handbook which include communicating absences in a professional and timely manner and being punctual, dependable, trustworthy, consistent, and reliable.
- (iv) Showing initiative and accepting responsibility in the performance of duties assigned.
- (v) Working with others in a way that is adaptable and flexible.
- (vi) Responding to feedback by listening, reflecting, and attempting to incorporate feedback into their teaching practice.
- (vii) Adhering to all practicum school policies and regulations related to parking, dress code, photocopying, technology use, supervision, etc.

b. Not engage in activities that adversely affect the quality of the pre-service teacher's duties. This means that the pre-service teacher shall

- (i) Ensure that they have a reliable means of transportation, even in adverse weather.
- (ii) Be responsible for their own self-care including sleep, taking prescribed medications, and attending to their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health so that they can be a reliable and trustworthy adult responsible for the care of vulnerable children and youth.
- (iii) Make arrangements so that parenting responsibilities and other work or volunteer commitments do not impede their scheduled course work and practicum commitments.

5 Reporting

All members of the St. Mary's University Faculty of Education share the responsibility for upholding and communicating professional standards to pre-service teachers. It is expected that any perceived breach of these standards be communicated directly and clearly to the pre-service teacher in a timely fashion. Should a breach of these standards occur, the following steps must be followed:

- 1) Attempt to foster effective relationships and approach the situation in a collegial way by communicating clearly and directly with the pre-service teacher who is not meeting the Code of Conduct Standards to attempt to resolve the issue (unless the nature of the offence would not allow you to do so). If the issue is resolved, no further action is required.
- 2) If the issue has not been resolved with conversation, or in the event that a direct conversation would be inappropriate due to the nature of the complaint, reach out to the Area Chair of Education (if during course work) or the Director of Practica (if during practicum) to discuss your concern.

- 3) Should a breach of the Code of Conduct be identified, then a formal complaint can be made. The complainant will be asked to complete the “Code of Conduct for Pre-service Teachers Complaint Form”.
- 4) If the complaint is related to any Non-Academic Misconduct such as criminal activity and/or Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment or Violence the complaint will be handled jointly by the Dean of Education and the AVP of Enrolment and Student Experience in alignment with this Code and the [StMU Sexual & Gender-Based Harassment and Violence Policy](#).
- 5) Once the Complaint Form is received, the Dean of Education or designate will meet separately with the complainant and the respondent within **5 business days** of receipt of the “Code of Conduct for Pre-service Teachers Complaint Form”. (Depending upon the nature and timing of the complaint, the “designate” could be the Area Chair of Education, Director of Practica or AVP of Enrolment and Student Experience.)
- 6) The practicum experience of the complainant and/or the respondent may be delayed or put on hold until such time as the complaint can be duly investigated.
- 7) Whether or not there has been a breach of the Code will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 8) Conduct that does not comply with the Code may result in a notation being placed in the pre-service teacher’s permanent file with the Registrar, a *Notice of Concern* being initiated, the pre-service teacher’s failure of a practicum course, or withdrawal from the B.Ed. Program for the year, as determined by the Dean of Education, and/or removal from the B.Ed. program, and/or expulsion from the University as determined by the Dean of Education and Vice President Academic.