

1 RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PROFESSION

Trust in the educational system depends upon a level of professional conduct and responsibility that may be higher than required by law. This entails holding one and others to the same ethical standards.

A. Demonstrates responsibility to oneself as an ethical professional by:

1. Acknowledging that lack of awareness, knowledge, or understanding of the Code is not, in itself, a defense to a charge of unethical conduct;
2. Knowing and upholding the procedures, policies, laws, and regulations relevant to professional practice regardless of personal views;
3. Holding oneself responsible for ethical conduct;
4. Monitoring and maintaining sound mental, physical, and emotional health necessary to perform duties and services of any professional assignment; and taking appropriate measures when personal or health-related issues may interfere with work-related duties;
5. Refraining from professional or personal activity that may lead to reducing one's effectiveness within the school community;
6. Avoiding the use of one's position for personal gain and avoiding the appearance of impropriety; and
7. Taking responsibility and credit only for work actually performed or produced, and acknowledging the work and contributions made by others.

B. Fulfills the obligation to address and attempt to resolve ethical issues by:

1. Confronting and taking reasonable steps to resolve conflicts between the Code and the implicit or explicit demands of a person or organization;
2. Maintaining fidelity to the Code by taking proactive steps when having reason to believe that another educator may be approaching or involved in an ethically compromising situation;
3. Neither discriminating nor retaliating against a person on the basis of having made an ethical complaint;
4. Neither filing nor encouraging frivolous ethical complaints solely to harm or retaliate; and
5. Cooperating fully during ethics investigations and proceedings.

C. Promotes and advances the profession within and beyond the school community by:

1. Influencing and supporting decisions and actions that positively impact teaching and learning, educational leadership and student services;
2. Engaging in respectful discourse regarding issues that impact the profession;
3. Enhancing one's professional effectiveness by staying current with ethical principles and decisions from relevant sources including professional organizations;
4. Actively participating in educational and professional organizations and associations; and
5. Advocating for adequate resources and facilities to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.

3 RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS

A primary obligation to treat students with dignity and respect, including promoting the health, safety and well-being of students by establishing and maintaining appropriate verbal, physical, emotional and social boundaries.

A. Respects the rights and dignity of students by:

1. Respecting students by taking into account their age, gender, culture, setting, and socioeconomic context;
2. Interacting with students with transparency and in appropriate settings;
3. Communicating with students in a clear, respectful, and culturally sensitive manner;
4. Taking into account how appearance and dress can affect one's interactions and relationships with students;
5. Considering the implication of accepting gifts from or giving gifts to students;
6. Engaging in physical contact with students only when there is a clearly defined purpose that benefits the student and continually keeps the safety and well-being of the student in mind;
7. Avoiding multiple relationships with students which might impair objectivity and increase the risk of harm to student learning or well-being or decrease educator effectiveness;
8. Acknowledging that there are no circumstances that allow for engagement in romantic or sexual relationships with students; and
9. Considering the ramifications of entering into an adult relationship of any kind with a former student, including but not limited to, any potential harm to the former student, public perception, and the possible impact on the educator's career. The professional educator ensures that the adult relationship was not started while the former student was in school.

B. Demonstrates an ethic of care through:

1. Seeking to understand students' educational, academic, personal, and social needs as well as students' values, beliefs, and cultural background(s);
2. Respecting the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual student including, but not limited to, actual and perceived gender, gender expression, gender identity, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and culture; and
3. Establishing and maintaining an environment that promotes the emotional, intellectual, physical, and sexual safety of all students.

C. Maintains student trust and confidentiality when interacting with students in a developmentally appropriate manner and within appropriate limits by:

1. Respecting the privacy of students and the need to hold in confidence certain forms of student communication, documents, or information obtained in the course of professional practice;
2. Upholding parents'/guardians' legal rights, as well as any legal requirements to reveal information related to legitimate concerns for the well-being of a student; and
3. Protecting the confidentiality of student records and releasing personal data in accordance with prescribed state and federal laws and local policies.

D. Promotes effective and appropriate relationships with employers by:

1. Using property, facilities, materials, and resources in accordance with local policies and state and federal laws;
2. Respecting intellectual property ownership rights when sharing materials (e.g. original lesson plans, district level curricula, syllabi, grade books, etc.);
3. Exhibiting personal and professional conduct that is in the best interest of the organization, learning community, school community, and profession; and
4. Considering the implications of offering or accepting gifts and/or preferential treatment by vendors or an individual in a position of professional influence or power.

E. Understands the problematic nature of multiple relationships by:

1. Considering the risks that multiple relationships might impair objectivity and increase the likelihood of harm to students' learning and well-being or diminish educator effectiveness;
2. Considering the risks and benefits of a professional relationship with someone with whom the educator has had a past personal relationship and vice versa;
3. Considering the implications and possible ramifications of engaging in a personal or professional relationship with parents and guardians, student teachers, colleagues, and supervisors; and
4. Ensuring that professional responsibilities to paraprofessionals, student teachers or interns do not interfere with responsibilities to students, their learning, and well-being.

D. Promotes the appropriate use of technology in educational settings by:

1. Advocating for equal access to technology for all students, especially those historically underserved;
2. Promoting the benefits of and clarifying the limitations of various appropriate technological applications with colleagues, appropriate school personnel, parents, and community members; and
3. Promoting technological applications (a) that are appropriate for students' individual needs, (b) that students understand how to use and (c) that assist and enhance the teaching and learning process.

Harm:

The impairment of learning or any potential action which may lead to physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or intellectual damage to a student or a member of the school community.

Learning Community:

A group of educators who work with one another to achieve the shared goals of their school and engage in collaborative professional learning to strengthen practice and increase student results.

Multiple Relationships:

Multiple relationships occur when the educator is in a professional role with one or more members of the school community and also has a personal relationship with that person or a member of that person's family. Multiple relationships have the potential to impair objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as an educator.

New Educators:

New educators include individuals in an educator preparation program or newly employed in the education profession, including paraprofessionals, teachers, administrators, and student support personnel.

Professional educator:

A licensed educator who demonstrates the highest standards of ethical and professionally competent practice and is committed to advancing the interests, achievement and well-being of students. The professional educator is also committed to supporting the school community and the education profession.

Proprietary materials:

Materials that are protected from unauthorized use by copyright or other forms of intellectual property rights.

Safe environments/Safety and well-being:

A school setting which promotes the well-being of all members of the school community and is characterized by the absence of physical, psychological, sexual or emotional harm

School Community:

This term usually refers to those stakeholders invested in the welfare of a school and its community. A school community includes school administrators, teachers, school staff members, students, their parents and families, school board members and other community members.

Sensitive Information:

This includes but is not limited to student information and educational records, including medical or counseling records.

Student:

A learner attending a P-12 school.

Technology:

Tools, systems, applications and processes that can include, but are not limited to, electronic communications networks such as the internet and electronic devices such as computers, laptops, phones and other hardware/software that deliver text, audio, images, animation, and streaming video.

Transparency:

Openness and accountability with respect to one's behaviors, actions and communications as an educator.