

Professional Code of Ethics for Teachers? by Stacy Zeiger



Because they have a daily influence on the lives of children, teachers are often held to high standards. In the midst of all of their responsibilities, they're required to serve as strong role models and demonstrate ethical behaviors as they interact with students, colleagues, parents and others. Developing and following a professional code of ethics helps make sure teachers act in a professional and ethical manner at all times.

Working with Students

A teacher's job is to provide a quality education to all students. A professional code of ethics must address this fact, stating that teachers must not show favoritism or discriminate against students. Teachers also must interact with students appropriately, not taking advantage of students in any way, bullying students or putting them down. Contact with students outside of the classroom or school building must be kept to a minimum and must focus on school-related activities and events.

Student Safety

In addition to a teacher's job to help all students learn, a professional code of ethics also addresses a teacher's responsibility to keep students safe. Teachers must abide by all school and classroom safety procedures to ensure student safety. It's also a teacher's responsibility to report instances of bullying and harassment. If a teacher suspects cases of abuse or neglect, or a student confides in a teacher in cases of abuse or neglect, the teacher is required to report it to the proper authorities, even if the student requests otherwise.

Professional Practice

Teachers must maintain ethical behavior in professional practice by accurately representing and maintaining certifications, licenses and other qualifications. Applying for a teaching certificate with false information or lying about meeting the requirements to renew the certificate can lead to a loss of teaching privileges. In addition to qualifications, teachers must practice ethical behavior when it comes to reporting grades and handling assessments. Misrepresenting grades or altering student responses on assessments can lead to criminal charges and the loss of a job.

Working with Colleagues

In a school, teachers must collaborate with administrators, fellow teachers and other employees in order to provide a safe and positive learning experience for students. A teacher must follow the direction of administrators, even if rules or expectations seems unreasonable, in order to avoid undermining an administrator's authority and to set a positive example for students. When disagreements arise between teachers, they must handle the disagreements in private and refrain from talking negatively about colleagues in front of students. In addition, teachers must engage in appropriate relationships with colleagues, keeping personal feelings and adult behaviors out of the school.

Interacting with Stakeholders

Aside from colleagues, teachers have a responsibility to interact positively with parents and other stakeholders in a child's education. Contact with parents must be kept professional, free from arguments and physical contact. If a teacher has an issue with a parent, another teacher or administrator must be present during all meetings. Teachers also must avoid being unduly influenced by parents and other stakeholders when it comes to students' grades or other school-related matters