

Guiding Principles: The Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators

Statement of Purpose

A New Hampshire educator is entrusted by the state and the public with a responsibility to teach New Hampshire's children the skills and model the values that will make each child a knowledgeable, capable, and engaged member of a democratic society. The educator accepts the responsibility to practice within the educational profession according to the highest ethical standards and aspires to continuously and consistently make decisions which are, first and foremost, within the best interests of the student.

This "Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators" is created as a set of guiding principles which articulate the responsibilities common to all members of the education profession. The Code of Ethics is designed to provide guidance to educators in the decision making process involving their interactions with students, the school community, colleagues, parents, and the public. The principles set forth in the Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators should be interpreted with reference to the context of the classroom, the learning community, and the educational profession.

This Code of Ethics for Educators is created upon the recognition that teaching is a profession. As such, there is an acknowledgement within the educational field that The Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators is applicable to all aspects of an educator's life.

The Code of Ethics for educators establishes guidance for all school personnel and is not intended to be a basis for civil liability nor is it designed to be a basis for employment action. The Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators establishes guidance for educators.

Definitions

The term “student” as used in The Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators means an individual who is enrolled or participating in any class or program from preschool through grade-12 at any school or education institution. “Student” includes individuals through nine months after graduation.

Principle I—Responsibility and Commitment to the Student

An educator holds a position which is imbued with public trust. As such, one of the educator’s obligations is to ensure that each student is treated with dignity and respect. An educator also establishes and maintains appropriate verbal, physical, emotional and social boundaries with every student.

In fulfillment of this principle, the educator:

- Interacts with students within appropriate settings;
- Communicates with students in a clear, respectful, and culturally sensitive manner;
- Considers the potential implications and possible perception of accepting a gift from a student and considers the potential implications and possible perception of giving a gift to a student;
- Considers the ramifications and possible perceptions 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 professional educator’s career;
- Recognizes and respects confidential information acquired in the course of employment regarding individual student safety, education, health, and personal information of students and their families.

Principle II—Responsibility and Commitment to the Education Profession and Colleagues

The educator is committed to a high level of professional ethics at all times. As such, the educator is expected to uphold and adhere to laws, regulations, policies, and procedures which are relevant to the educational profession regardless of personal viewpoints. There is also a recognition that the decisions and actions that the educator makes, whether inside or outside of the school and classroom, may be reflective of ones’ professional judgment.

In addition to holding oneself accountable to a high level of professional ethics, the educator encourages colleagues to meet the same high standards and to engage in discussions with appropriate colleagues on ethical matters.

In fulfillment of this principle, the educator:

- Values honesty and established commitments;

- Respects intellectual property and ownership rights when using or sharing materials such as lesson plans, research and assessment, curricula, syllabi, or gradebooks;
- Recognizes the possible impact and ramifications upon a colleague's professional reputation when speaking about a colleague in public and private communications;
- Communicates with colleagues in a clear, respectful, and culturally sensitive manner;
- Considers the ramifications of accepting or offering any gratuity, gift or favor which would influence or appear to influence ones' professional decisions; and
- Considers the ramifications of using institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage

Principle III—Responsibility and Commitment to the School Community

The educator models effective relationships and communicates responsibly among members of the school community, while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. The educator acts in the best interests of all students by advocating for equitable educational opportunities and endeavoring to present facts with fidelity to the content and without distortion, bias or personal prejudice.

In fulfillment of this principle, the educator:

- Communicates with parents and guardians in a respectful manner which represents students' best interests;
- Has an awareness and respect of the confidential nature of material received and communicated from a variety of audiences.
- Commits to equality, equity, and inclusion of colleagues, staff, students, parents or guardians and other members of the school community;
- Respects diversity amongst colleagues, staff, students, parents or guardians, and other members of the school community;
- Considers and recognizes the potential ramifications of having a personal relationship with colleagues, staff, students, parents, or guardians and other members of the school community in consideration of the role and the perception of the educator within the classroom and the community; and
- Recognizes that the professional educator often serves multiple roles within the school, as such must consider that the varied relationships have the potential to impair ones' objectivity.

Principle IV - Responsible and ethical use of technology as it relates to students, schools, and other educational professionals

The educator considers the impact of consuming, creating, distributing and communicating information through the use of any and all types of technology.

In fulfillment of this principle, the professional educator:

- Utilizes social media responsibly, transparently and primarily for the purpose of teaching and learning;
- Considers the ramifications and public perception of using social media;
- Exercises prudence to establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries of time and place in all electronic communications with students.

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