

INTRODUCTION *to* TEAM MODULE 5

The Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators

*Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies
Section 10-145d-400a*



As public service employees, educators hold a special position of trust.



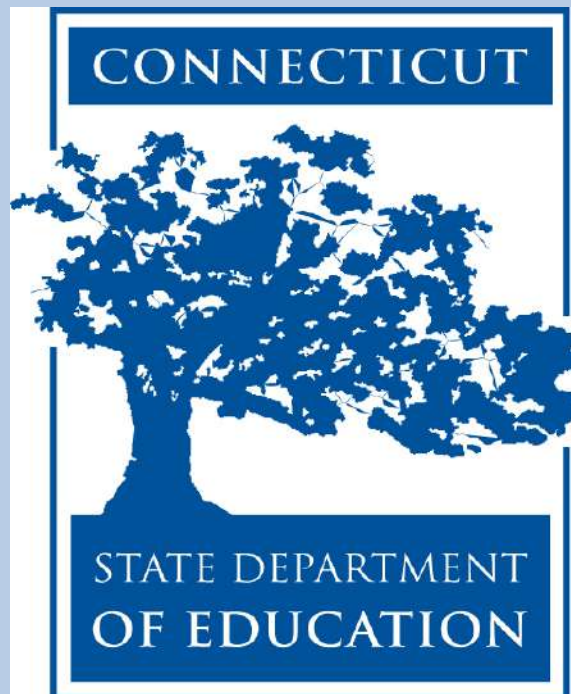
Educators exercise powers that have a significant impact on the lives of children and young people.



Consequently, there is a community expectation that these powers will be properly and prudently used.



The Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators is a set of principles which the education profession expects its members to honor and follow.



Key words underpinning the code

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

integrity

committed

TRUST

responsibility

fairness

confidentiality

professionalism

accountability

positive role models

propriety

RESPONSIVENESS

high standards

values

respect

Educators are expected to practice the profession according to the highest possible degree of ethical conduct and standards.



A code helps us to understand our responsibilities, prioritize our obligations, and find wise resolutions to the ethical dilemmas we face.



Ethical training has become an important part of the business and professional world.



Attorneys



Physicians



Accountants



Therapists



Clergy

According to Charlotte Danielson,
teachers make over 3,000
decisions per day.



*Are teachers prepared to
always make the right
decision?*



Unfortunately, educator misconduct occurs and is a serious concern for communities, schools, districts and states across the country.

Charges of teacher misconduct are on rise
Published: Saturday, April 22, 2006 12:00 a.m. MDT
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Teacher Web sites triggering questions
Some are posting personal data that students can access
Published: Saturday, June 10, 2006 12:00 a.m. MDT By Laura Hancock

The New York Times

Thursday, March 30, 2011 1:01 PM EDT

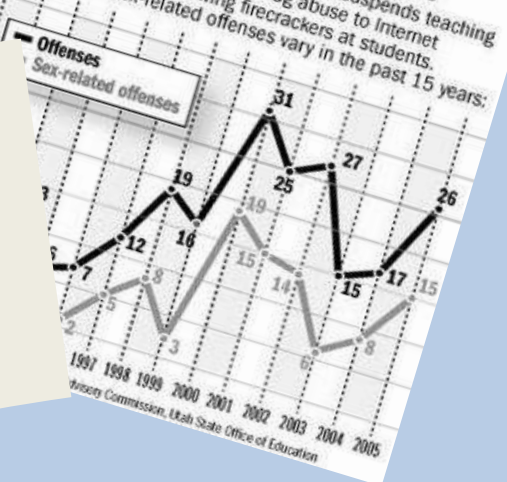
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Questions

OPINION
Op-Ed: Take Up Out of
the Ballgame
Ban the use of tobacco
products

Sex offenses and teacher licenses
The State Board of Education revokes or suspends teaching licenses for improprieties from drug abuse to Internet pornography – even throwing firecrackers at students. Proportions of sex-related offenses vary in the past 15 years:



Not only does it harm our students,



educator misconduct disgraces the
community and denigrates the
profession.

A code supports us in doing what is right.

**It provides support for behaving
ethically**

especially

**when there is pressure or
temptation**

to do what is *easiest*
or

what will make people like us.

Teaching is complex.



Teachers continually shape and reshape their actions to respond to the individual needs of their students.

Teachers who foster positive relationships with their students create classroom environments more conducive to learning and meet students' developmental, emotional and academic needs.

Developing a positive relationship with students is essential to effective teaching.

Marzano (2003) states that students will resist rules and procedures along with consequent disciplinary actions if the foundation of a good relationship is lacking.

When you develop positive relationships with your students, they are more likely to engage academically and achieve more.

Students are more likely to be emotionally and intellectually invested in classes where they have positive relationships with their teachers.



How does a teacher develop positive relationships with students and uphold the Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators?



Students need to feel a sense of comfort and safety from physical and emotional abuse and from criticism in their classrooms.



Schools are responsible for providing students with a **safe environment** in which to develop **academically, emotionally and behaviorally.**



Educators develop positive relationships by

- making responsible decisions,*
- effectively handling challenging situations and*
- heading off potential conflicts.*



Students are very sensitive to a teacher's attitude towards the school and the class in general;



teachers must be certain that they are modeling positive behaviors for the class.

Learning about students' cultural backgrounds



help teachers relate more effectively
with their students.

Teachers are expected to use
good judgment at all times.



The Code applies at all times.



This includes times when a teacher is not at school and not performing work duties.

Even though an individual's intent may be *purely innocent*,

engaging in certain activities with students or in the presence of students

can subject a teacher to possible *perceptions of impropriety*.

The *appearance* of unethical behavior
can be just as damaging to public
confidence in the profession as
unethical conduct itself.

What are some examples of behavior that may raise a reasonable suspicion?

- Generally, meeting with a student alone, behind closed doors, regardless of gender.
- Giving students gifts, rewards or incentives that are not school related.
- Touching or having physical contact with students that is unwanted and/or inappropriate.

What are some examples of behavior that may raise a reasonable suspicion?

- Communicating with students, by phone/cell phone, email, Internet, texting or in person at any time for purposes that are ***not specifically related to school.***

What are some examples of behavior that may raise a reasonable suspicion?

- Providing students with your personal home/cell phone number, personal Email address, home address or other personal contact information, ***except for specific school-related purposes.***

What are some examples of behavior that may raise a reasonable suspicion?

- Making statements or comments, *either directly or in the presence of students*, which are not age-appropriate, professional or which may be considered sexual in nature, harassing or demeaning.

What are some examples of behavior that may raise a reasonable suspicion?

- Engaging in behaviors that are ***immoral, illegal, unethical, unprofessional*** or ***exploitive***.
- Transporting students in your personal vehicle without proper permission from administrators and parents/family.

What are some examples of behavior that may raise a reasonable suspicion?

- Taking or accompanying students to any event that is **not** school related.
- Meeting with or being in the company of students at **non-school** related events.

There are boundaries that cannot be crossed.



When allegations of inappropriate conduct or behavior are made, the District is obligated to investigate the allegations, and



if warranted, take appropriate administrative, legal and/or disciplinary action.

What are the consequences of teacher misconduct?

Sometimes a violation of the Code is solely an employment matter and most appropriately handled by the employer;

other times conduct may warrant more severe and significant action.

What are the consequences of teacher misconduct?

- Administration imposed discipline
- Suspension of employment
- Dismissal from employment
- Criminal proceedings
- Certification denial or revocation
- Civil litigation- *teachers can be sued as individuals*

Benefits of Facilitated Conversations

Following this introduction to Module 5, you and your colleagues will participate in a facilitated conversation to examine several case scenarios in which you will have the opportunity to

- share multiple perspectives,
- learn from one another,
- examine consequences of actions
- examine strategies to assure more positive outcomes and
- foster professional growth.

The focus of Module 5 is to raise a level of awareness about the *Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators*



and to discuss your professional obligations and the potential consequences of misconduct.

Cases pose questions that draw on the guiding principles or standards of the teaching profession.

Entering into discussions regarding real life ethical situations provides teachers with the opportunity to consider and to reflect on their own professional judgments and actions.

Be a Professional!

Deciding on the right course of action will often involve weighing competing priorities and responsibilities.



Be a Professional!

However, if a teacher is unsure of what to do

- discuss the matter in confidence with an appropriate individual such as a supervisor
- seek further advice from the school nurse, social worker, guidance counselor, etc. depending on the situation

Before proceeding, teachers should ask themselves these questions:

- Are my actions within the spirit and letter of the law?
- Are my actions consistent with the district's goals, values and principles and the *Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators*?

- Could I adequately defend my action to my supervisor, the parents/families and the community if the situation was made public?
- Is this the right thing for me to do?

- What will the outcome of my actions be for
 - students?
 - the school, the district and the public interest?
 - parents?
 - my colleagues?
 - the teaching profession?
 - others?
 - me?

“A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” -Henry Brooks Adams

