

Professional Ethics – Standard of Performance and Conduct for Teachers

The Board of Education approves and recommends the *Code of Ethics of the National Education Association adopted by the NEA Representative Assembly in 1975 and adopted by the Oklahoma Education Association, November 2, 1975 as follows:

Code of Ethics of the Education Profession - Preamble

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of the democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards by which to judge conduct.

The remedies specified by the NEA and/or its affiliates for the violation of any provision of this Code shall be exclusive and no such provision shall be enforceable in any form other than the one specifically designated by the NEA or its affiliates.

STANDARD OF PERFORMANCE AND CONDUCT FOR TEACHERS

Teachers are charged with the education of the youth of this state. In order to perform effectively, teachers must demonstrate a belief in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizing the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurturing of democratic principles.

In recognition of the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process and by virtue of the desire for the respect and confidence of their colleagues, students, parents, and the community; teachers are to be guided in their conduct by commitment to students and the profession.

PRINCIPLE I - COMMITMENT TO THE STUDENTS

Oklahoma Administrative Code (OAC) 210:20-29-3 – Effective June 25, 1993

The teacher must strive to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The teacher must work to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the teacher:

1. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning,
2. Shall not unreasonably deny the student access to varying points of view,
3. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress,
4. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety,
5. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement,

6. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social, or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly
 - a. Exclude any student from participation in any program;
 - b. Deny benefits to any students; or
 - c. Grant any advantage to any student.*This includes antisemitism, which is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews.*
7. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
8. Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose and is permitted by law or is required by law.

PRINCIPLE II - COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION**Oklahoma Administrative Code (OAC) 210:20-29-4 – Effective June 25, 1993**

The teaching profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service.

In order to assure that the quality of the services of the teaching profession meets the expectations of the State and its citizens, the teacher shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, fulfill professional responsibilities with honor and integrity, promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator:

1. Shall not, in an application for a professional position, deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications;
2. Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications;
3. Shall not assist any entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute;
4. Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position;
5. Shall not assist an unqualified person in the unauthorized practice of the profession;
6. Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law;
7. Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague; and
8. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.

PRINCIPLE III - Title 70, Oklahoma Statute, Section 6-101.22

1. Subject to the provisions of the Teacher Due Process Act of 1990, a career teacher may be dismissed or not reemployed for:

- A. Willful neglect of duty;
 - B. Repeated negligence in performance of duty;
 - C. Mental or physical abuse to a child;
 - D. Knowing and willful failure of report suspected child abuse or neglect;
 - E. Incompetency.
 - F. Instructional ineffectiveness;
 - G. Unsatisfactory teaching performance; or
 - H. Commission of an act of moral turpitude.
 - I. Abandonment of contract.
 - J. Conviction of a felony
 - K. After a finding that such person has engaged in criminal sexual activity or sexual misconduct that has impeded the effectiveness of the individual's performance of school duties, or
 - L. Failure to earn required staff development points
2. A career teacher shall not be subject to dismissal or non-reemployment for items A, B, D, E, and F, above unless and until a written admonishment has been issued in accordance with relevant law.
3. A probationary teacher shall not be subject to dismissal or non-reemployment for inadequate teaching performance unless or until a written admonishment has been issued in accordance with relevant law.
4. Temporary teachers, substitutes teacher, adult education teachers, and teachers employed in positions fully funded by private or federal grants shall not be protected by the provisions of the Teacher Due Process Act.
5. A teacher convicted of a felony shall be dismissed or not reemployed unless a presidential or gubernatorial pardon has been issued.
6. A teacher may be dismissed, refused employment, or not reemployed after a finding that such person engaged in criminal sexual activity or sexual misconduct that has impeded the effectiveness of the individual's performance of school duties;
- A. "Criminal sexual activity" means the commission of an act defined in Section 886 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes, which is the act of sodomy; and
 - B. "Sexual misconduct" means the soliciting or imposing of criminal sexual activity (70 O.S. § 6-101.22).
7. A teacher may be dismissed, refused employment, or not reemployed after a finding that such person has, either in the presence of a minor or in a manner that such person has participated in making available to a minor online, engaged in sexual acts, acts that appeal to the prurient interest in sex as found by the average person applying contemporary community standards, or acts that excessively promote sexuality in light of the educational value of the material and in light of the youngest age of any student with access to said material.

REFERENCE: 70 O.S. § 6-101.22, et seq.

NOTE: In accordance with the referenced statutes, a copy of these standards of performance and conduct will be provided to each teacher.

THIS POLICY REQUIRED BY LAW