Tennessee Teacher Code of Ethics

49-5-1001. Short title.

This part shall be known and may be cited as the "Teacher Code of **Ethics.**"

HISTORY: Acts 2010, ch. 916, § 1.

49-5-1002. Legislative findings.

The general assembly finds and declares that:

(1) An 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 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. An educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards; and

(2) An 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.

HISTORY: Acts 2010, ch. 916, § 1.

49-5-1003. Educator's obligations to students.

(a) An educator shall strive to help each student realize the student's potential as a worthy and effective member of society. An educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

(b) In fulfillment of this obligation to the student, an educator shall:

(1) Not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning;

(2) Not unreasonably deny the student access to varying points of view;

(3) Not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress;

(4) Make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety;

(5) Not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement;

(6) 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 student; or

(C) Grant any advantage to any student;

(7) Not use professional relationships with students for private advantage; and

(8) Not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

HISTORY: Acts 2010, ch. 916, § 1.

49-5-1004. Educator's obligations to the education profession.

(a) The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service. In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons.

(b) In fulfillment of this obligation to the profession, an educator shall not:

(1) Deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications in an application for a professional position;

(2) Misrepresent the educator's professional qualifications;

(3) Assist entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute;

(4) Knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position;

(5) Assist a noneducator in the unauthorized practice of teaching;

(6) Disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless the disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law;

(7) Knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague; and

(8) Accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.

(9) Use illegal or unauthorized drugs.

(c) In fulfillment of this obligation to the profession, educators shall:

(1) Administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically; and

(2) Conduct themselves in a manner that preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession.

HISTORY: Acts 2010, ch. 916, § 1; 2018, ch. 937, §§ 2, 3.

49-5-1005. Public access to teacher code of ethics.

The state board of education shall post the teacher code of ethics on its web site.

HISTORY: Acts 2011, ch. 214, § 1.