

Draft

Code of Professional Ethics for School Teachers

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Preface

In pursuance of the recommendations of the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986/1992, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in collaboration with the All India Primary Teachers Federation (AIPTF), All India Secondary Teachers Federation (AISTF) and All India Federation of Educational Associations (AIFEA) had developed, for the first time, a Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers, in 1997. Recognizing the need for revising the Code of Professional Ethics for School Teachers, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) appointed a Committee comprising Prof. A.K. Sharma, former Director, NCERT, Prof. G.L. Arora, former Head Department of Teacher Education and Extension, NCERT, Prof. Pranati Panda, National University of Educational Planning and Administration and Prof. Najma Amin, Jamia Millia Islamia.

The Committee constituted by the NCTE reviewed this Code keeping in view the context of the relevant sections of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 and also examined the Codes of Professional Ethics currently in use in some other countries. The draft Code prepared by the NCTE Committee was shared with the representatives of State Education Departments, All India Federations of Primary and Secondary Teachers organizations and UNESCO, and senior officials of the Ministry of HRD, educational administrators and experts in a National Seminar. It was also put on the website of NCTE inviting comments and suggestions from the stakeholders in school education. Valuable suggestions received online and in the seminar have been duly considered while finalizing this document.

Ideally, the Code of Professional Ethics should be prepared by the professional organizations of teachers themselves as it is their responsibility to ensure its observance as a self-imposed discipline on the part of their members. The NCTE has prepared this document as a facilitative mechanism for professional bodies of teachers to use it as a template for discussion amongst them, make any amendments, if necessary, and adopt it to give dignity to their profession.

The present document comprises three chapters. The Code of Professional Ethics is given in Chapter 1, a mechanism for its observance is suggested in Chapter 2, Explanatory Notes on different articles of the Code are given in Chapter 3. The Explanatory Notes have been included to facilitate better understanding by the teachers of the provisions contained in the Code.

I am grateful to the members of the Committee for sparing their time and giving us the benefit of their long experience in the field. I am also thankful to the representatives of Teacher organizations for their whole hearted cooperation in this endeavour which has the potential to raise the status of the teaching profession.

NEW DELHI, _____December, 2010

**Prof. Mohd. Akhtar Siddiqui
Chairperson, NCTE**

Chapter 1

Code of Professional Ethics for School Teachers

Introduction

It is universally felt that like all other professions, the teaching profession should also have its own Code of Professional Ethics which indeed is a pre-requisite to ensure its dignity and integrity. It is also significant that the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 entrusts teachers with some onerous professional responsibilities to be internalized by them in the performance of their duties. Accordingly, it is considered necessary that the Code of Professional Ethics be evolved and adopted by the teaching community.

For the purpose of this Code, the term “teacher” covers all school teachers, whether in government or private schools, on full-time or part-time basis, at the elementary and secondary levels and the teachers holding administrative and supervisory positions

The Code of Professional Ethics for teachers provides a framework of principles to guide them in discharging their obligations towards students, parents, colleagues and community. Increased awareness of the ethical principles governing the teaching profession is essential to ensure ‘professionalism’ among teachers.

Preamble

- *Recognizing* that every child has a fundamental right to education of good quality;
- *Recognizing* that every child has an inherent potential and talent;
- *Recognizing* that education should be directed to the all round development of the human personality;
- *Recognizing* the need for developing faith in the guiding principles of our polity, viz., democracy, social justice and secularism;

- *Recognizing* the need to promote through education the concept of composite culture of India and a sense of national identity;
- *Recognizing* that teachers, being an integral part of the social milieu, share the needs and aspirations of the people;
- *Recognizing* the need to enhance self-esteem of teachers;
- *Recognizing* the need to organize teaching as a profession for which expert knowledge, specialized skills and dedication are pre-requisites;
- *Recognizing* that the community respect and support for the teachers are dependent on the teachers' professionalism; and
- *Recognizing* the need for self-direction and self-discipline among members of the teaching community,

the present Code of Professional Ethics for school teachers is an attempt to provide direction and guidance to the teachers in enhancing the dignity of their professional work.

1. Obligations towards Students

- 1.1 Treats all students with love and affection.
- 1.2 Respects the value of being just and impartial to all students irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, sex, economic status, disability, language and place of birth.
- 1.3 Facilitates students' physical, social, intellectual, emotional, and moral development.
- 1.4 Respects basic human dignity of the child in all aspects of school life.
- 1.5 Makes planned and systematic efforts to facilitate the child to actualize his/her potential and talent.
- 1.6 Transacts the curriculum in conformity with the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.
- 1.7 Adapts his/her teaching to the individual needs of students.

- 1.8 Maintains the confidentiality of the information concerning students and dispenses such information only to those who are legitimately entitled to it.
- 1.9 Refrains from subjecting any child to fear, trauma, anxiety, physical punishment, sexual abuse, and mental and emotional harassment.
- 1.10 Keeps a dignified demeanour commensurate with the expectations from a teacher as a role model.

2. Obligations towards Parents, Community and Society

- 2.1 Establishes a relationship of trust with parents/guardians in the interest of all round development of students.
- 2.2 Desists from doing any thing which is derogatory to the respect of the child or his/her parents/guardians.
- 2.3 Strives to develop respect for the composite culture of India among students.
- 2.4 Keeps the country uppermost in mind, refrains from taking part in such activities as may spread feelings of hatred or enmity among different communities, religious or linguistic groups.

3. Obligations towards the Profession and Colleagues

- 3.1 Strives for his/her continuous professional development.
- 3.2 Creates a culture that encourages purposeful collaboration and dialogue among colleagues and stakeholders.
- 3.3 Takes pride in the teaching profession and treats other members of the profession with respect and dignity.
- 3.4 Refrains from engaging himself/herself in private tuition or private teaching activity.
- 3.5 Refrains from accepting any gift, or favour that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.
- 3.6 Refrains from making unsubstantiated allegations against colleagues or higher authorities.

- 3.7 Avoids making derogatory statements about colleagues, especially in the presence of pupils, other teachers, officials or parents.
- 3.8 Respects the professional standing and opinions of his/her colleagues.
- 3.9. Maintains confidentiality of information concerning colleagues and dispenses such information only when authorized to do so.

Chapter 2

OBSERVANCE OF THE CODE

The difference between the Code of Conduct and the Code of Professional Ethics needs to be appreciated. As far as the provision of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 is concerned, particularly with reference to Section 24 of the Act pertaining to duties of teachers, *enforcement of the Code of Conduct is perhaps the answer*. This enforcement is the responsibility of the appointing/disciplinary authority. However, the provisions which define the Code of Conduct could also be incorporated in the Code of Professional Ethics, as making them ethical provisions will always desist teachers from violation of the Code of Conduct.

Like all other professions, the teaching profession should also move towards self-regulation, which implies that every teacher should have the inner urge to adhere to the ethical principles listed in the Code of Professional Ethics for teachers. However, in spite of the expectation of the voluntary observance of the Code, some cases of violation of the Code or of partial adherence to it are likely to occur in the vast system of school education. Therefore, a suitable mechanism needs to be evolved to ensure that all members of the profession follow the ethical principles enshrined in the Code.

The violation of the Code of Conduct invites disciplinary action for which detailed rules are prescribed. However, in the case of violation of Code of Professional Ethics by teachers, the responsibility to discipline them should rest with the authorized representatives of the profession. The magnitude or seriousness of the violation may not be the same in all the cases. The cases of violation or non-observance shall have to be dealt with at different levels and in different ways in accordance with the nature of the violation.

In other professions, as for instance, medicine, law, etc. after completion of the professional course, the pass-out is registered as a bonafide practitioner of the profession and is bound by a Code of Professional Ethics relevant to his/her profession. In case of any reported violation of the code, the authorized professional body initiates

disciplinary action which may even lead to cancellation of the license to practice the profession. No such provision exists in the case of the teaching profession.

To begin with, All India Federations of Primary and Secondary Teachers organizations should formally adopt the 'Code' and resolve to take all possible measures to ensure its observance in letter and spirit. At the time of initial appointment, a teacher should be provided a copy of the 'Code of Professional Ethics' for perusal and should be further required to furnish an 'Oath', before joining the profession that he/she would always strive to observe the 'Code' in letter and spirit. A suggestive format of the 'Oath' is given at Annexure 2.

Mechanism to Deal with Violations

A possible mechanism to deal with non-observance of the Code is suggested here. A four-tier mechanism could be evolved to deal with the violations noticed or reported, as outlined below:-

(i) School / Block Ethics Committee

In the case of bigger secondary or higher secondary schools where the number of teachers is quite sizeable, an Ethics Committee at the school level comprising senior members of the staff should be appointed. In the case of Primary/Elementary schools, keeping in view the fewer numbers of teachers, the Ethics Committee could be constituted at the Block or Cluster level by the concerned Associations of teachers. The Committee may deal with the complaints regarding punctuality, regularity, completion of curriculum, engagement in private tuitions, etc. and, in the first instance, should try to persuade the erring teachers to mend their ways.

The Teachers Associations and Ethics Committees should make it clear to the teachers that if they do not mend their ways, the Association would not support them if disciplinary proceedings are initiated against them by the authorities.

(ii) District Ethics Committee

The recognized Teacher Organizations/Associations in the State shall jointly constitute the Ethics Committee at the district level comprising representatives of teachers and eminent educationists. The Committee should deal with complaints referred to it by the School/Block Ethics Committee, where the teachers have failed to improve their conduct in spite of the efforts made by the School/Block Ethics Committee. This Committee should deal with complaints of serious nature such as violation of Constitutional Provisions, cases of child abuse, spreading feelings of hatred or enmity among different communities, etc. The Committee may issue 'Advisories' to the erring teachers, if necessary. In the case of recurrence of violation of the Code, the District Committee shall refer the matter to the State Committee for appropriate action.

(iii) State Ethics Committee

The recognized Teacher Organizations in the state shall jointly appoint an Ethics Committee comprising eminent educationists, representatives of teacher organizations and parents. The Committee should deal with complaints referred to it by the District Committees. The Committee may debar the erring teachers from contesting elections for various offices in the concerned Teacher Organization or suspend their membership.

(iv) National Ethics Committee

At the national level, NCTE and All India Federations of school teachers may jointly appoint a National Ethics Committee comprising eminent educationists, representatives of Federations of Elementary and Secondary Teacher Organizations, National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and parents. The Committee should be responsible for consideration of issues which may require periodical review of the code and also for the formulation of guidelines for the functioning of Ethics Committees at different levels.

Creating Awareness

To begin with, the Code should be translated into various Indian Languages and circulated widely amongst the teachers. The National Level and State Level Teachers'

organizations and Institutions responsible for teachers' In-service education should organize orientation programmes for teachers and discuss with them the implications of the Code. The Explanatory Notes in respect of various Articles of the Code will be helpful in such orientation programmes. The code should also be included in the curriculum of various teacher education programmes in the country so that the prospective teachers are fully aware about the ethical principles enshrined in it before their entry into the profession.

Chapter 3

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. **Obligations towards Students**

1.1 **Treats all students with love and affection**

The demonstration of genuine love and affection by teachers for their students is essential for learning to happen. Treating all children with love and affection irrespective of their school performance and achievement level is the core of the teaching learning process. Students who do not perform well in studies are generally deprived of teachers' consideration for them. In addition, the teacher should also treat all children with equal love and affection irrespective of their parental background and religious or caste affiliations. The teacher as support to the parents should deal with students with a humane touch as through this process, student-teacher rapport could be established for mutually beneficial interaction between them. Teachers should create trust, confidence, interest, enthusiasm and hope and not fear, frustration and disappointment in the students. The approaches in this regard need not be defined as each teacher has the potential to design his/her behavioural styles to provide an affable support to children.

1.2 **Respects the value of being just and impartial to all students irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, sex, economic status, disability, language and place of birth.**

School is a place where social justice and equity have to be practised and valued by the teachers. Teachers' own belief in democratic principles, tolerance, social justice and equity prepares a better climate for students' learning of these values. Impartial attitude and non-discriminatory practices towards all students should be ingrained in the school practices. The teacher's personal belief pattern on caste, religion, sex, economic status, language and place of birth, if not in conformity with Constitutional tenets, will severely affect the equity fabric of the class.

1.3 Facilitates students' physical, social, intellectual, emotional and moral development.

Childhood is a period of growth and change requiring development of child's physical and mental capabilities to the fullest. Currently in the schooling process, much stress is given to cognitive development (the traditional 3 Rs) which needs to be broadened to other areas of child development. The teacher should act as a facilitator for the students to engage them in diverse activities for their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and moral development. The physical development of students as an important aim of education should be encouraged through physical education activities. Helping students understand the social context, its problems, societal values and to inculcate emotional intelligence through teaching learning process, would benefit them for their all round development. Physical and emotional security is the cornerstone for all learning right from the primary to the secondary school years and even afterwards.

1.4 Respects basic human dignity of the child in all aspects of school life

There is a need to recognize that each individual child has its own rights and dignity as a human being and a member of a democratic society. Violation of rights of the child is often observed in our schooling process. For example, many a time teachers prohibit students to express their feelings. Any derogatory remark by the teacher affects the child's self esteem which, in turn, affects his/her learning progress. Children's voices and experiences do not find expression in the class room. The participation of all students in all activities of the school with respect and dignity need to be encouraged. Teachers will do well to study the U.N. Declaration on Child Rights to which India is also a signatory and also the Report of the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) – for updating their understanding of this concern of child rights.

A school, no doubt, has the right to frame rules for maintaining discipline without which it is difficult to organize proper teaching learning in schools. But the school

must ensure that the rules framed are such as do not violate the basic human dignity of the child.

1.5 Makes planned and systematic efforts to facilitate the child to actualize his/her potential and talent.

Recognizing the potential and talent of each child is the prime responsibility of every teacher. The teacher should recognize the multiple talents such as sports, music, dance and other creative endeavours amongst children. Disproportionate appreciation is generally given to academic achievement of the students, neglecting their other talents and potential. The children's creativity, their potential and talent need to be recognized to provide enough opportunities for their nurturance. Hence teacher's role is critical not only in recognizing the potential and talents in different areas but also in planning accordingly to help children actualize their potential to the fullest extent. But the task is simply said than done. The teacher may have to interact with peers and experts and also with children and to observe them continuously in order to ascertain their talents. He/she will have to integrate the knowledge about the child with the strategies of transacting curriculum.

1.6 Transacts the curriculum in conformity with the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.

The values enshrined in the Constitution of India are the guiding principles for the social transformation and establishment of an egalitarian social order. The Constitutional values such as democracy, secularism, equality, justice and liberty need to be mainstreamed in the diverse activities of the school through both curricular and co-curricular interventions. There may be instances where the pedagogical practices adopted by the teachers are against the Constitutional values and also the rights of children. The teachers will do well to pay attention to Article 51 A of the Constitution of India, dealing with Fundamental Duties of

Citizens and translate the provisions of clauses (a) to (k) of the Article through example and precept.

1.7 Adapts his/her teaching to the individual needs of students

The primacy of learner as a unique individual in the inclusive and diversified classroom is widely acknowledged. The child-centered pedagogy encourages us to think that learners have diverse needs and different experiences. This requires fundamental change in understanding the individual learner and the learning processes. It is a great challenge for the teacher to understand each child's needs in matters of acquiring knowledge and this is possible only when the teacher becomes conscious of such a role and strives to continuously keep abreast of the pedagogies of attending to the individual needs. Learners actively construct their own knowledge by connecting new ideas to existing ideas on the basis of different activities in which they may be involved. Therefore, teacher's role assumes more of an active facilitator in the process of knowledge construction in which children are engaged. Active engagement involves enquiry, exploration, questioning, debates, application and reflection. Allowing children to ask questions that require them to relate what they are learning in school to things happening outside.

A student may have some special needs of learning based on his/her personal background and previous knowledge. But children belonging to diverse groups such as children residing in slum areas, rural or remote areas and hilly areas may have some special needs. While planning his/her teaching, the teacher should take all these factors into consideration.

1.8 Maintains the confidentiality of the information concerning students and dispenses such information only to those who are legitimately entitled to it.

A teacher not only teaches a child but also has knowledge about student's family, culture and community. The close interaction between the teachers and the

taught builds the trust and respect vital for the development of the personality of the child. Many a time, the teacher also serves as counsellor with whom personal and private information about the student is available. Hence, it is the ethical responsibility of teachers to maintain the confidentiality of information which the student has shared or the teacher has obtained from different sources. The information could be shared with others very judiciously for the betterment of students. If parents need to be informed in certain cases, the information may be communicated in true spirit. Elements of personal life of the child when divulged publically can cause an irretrievable damage to his/her growth and development, as well as his/her personality.

1.9 Refrains from subjecting any child to fear, trauma, anxiety, physical punishment, sexual abuse and mental and emotional harassment.

The teacher should take all appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Any kind of corporal punishment and emotional harassment by teachers has larger implications for child's life. There are instances of teachers who harbour violence in the school through their behaviour. There is a greater need to change our belief pattern that punishment brings better learning. The teaching community needs to refrain from such activities as violate child rights. Observance of new classroom rules in the context of the guidelines of the NCPCR in view of its status as a law enforcing body, need to be the guiding principle for teacher's behaviour. Corporal punishment now includes rapping on the knuckles, running on the school ground, kneeling or standing for long hours, beaten with a ruler, pinching, slapping, child sexual abuse, locking up children in classrooms, electric shock, that is, all acts leading to physical and mental injury, need to be consciously avoided.

Sexual abuse is more than bruises and broken bones. While physical abuse might be the most visible sign, other types of abuse, such as emotional abuse also leave deep, long-lasting scars on the minds of the children. Teacher as a moral leader must restrain from any act involving sexual abuse. Any involvement in such a behaviour demolishes the prestige of the teacher in the eyes of the children and may become a source of hatred for the teacher. It certainly proves to be an emotional trauma for the Child. The teachers must follow the guidelines formulated by the Supreme Court of India and the NCPCR regarding sexual abuse at workplaces and in schools.

1.10 Keeps a dignified demeanour commensurate with the expectations from a teacher as a role model.

The teacher has been eulogized in the Indian context in sublime terms. The 'Guru' of ancient era was a person par excellence. In modern times we have visualized teacher as one who undertakes the onerous responsibility of shaping the destiny of the nation in the classrooms (Education Commission, 1964-66). Even the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986/92 gives a tall order to the role of the teacher when it states that "no people can rise above the level of its teachers". With such expectations, the teacher symbolizes the best in every facet of his/her personality. The style of his/her dress, the style and content of communication, the example he/she sets for his students create an indelible influence on the young minds. Any intentional or unintentional expression of his / her personality traits can cast such impressions which may adversely influence the student. In every aspect, the teacher has to be the living practitioner of all the tenets expressed in the "Code of Professional Ethics".

2. Obligations towards Parents, Community and Society

2.1 Establishes a relationship of trust with parents/guardians in the interest of all round development of students

There may be situations where parents may bring problems relating to their wards to teachers, which require equanimity on the part of the teacher to deal with both parents and the students. Parents sometimes tend to ignore the faults of their children in spite of the teacher bringing the same to their notice. There may be a positive fall out of outcomes if parents in such circumstances are responded with cordiality. Undoubtedly, the influence this may make on the students about the teacher can bring the student much closer to the teacher, as interpersonal relations are at the heart of maintaining a harmonious relationship conducive for teaching and learning. Teacher being the central figure in the educational system has a connectivity with students, both in and outside the classroom, his/her colleagues, and the parents. The quality of the relationship maintained by him/her with the parents can go a long way in understanding the child, and also in laying the foundation for a better atmosphere of understanding between the student and his/her parents. In an environment of inhibition, the quality of learning can be impaired. If the child develops a barrier of inhibition between himself/herself and the teacher, it can become an impediment in drawing the best out of the teacher. The student should develop a positive feeling so that the communication between his/her parents and the teacher in no way affects his/her self-esteem.

A majority of parents welcome being kept informed of the performance of the child in the school, both in and outside the classroom. The good work done by the student can be shared with the parents as this is likely to lead to better appreciation of the school. Students at the school stage are in an impressionable age. They are sometimes, likely to go astray and timely correction in their misdemeanour can check later agony to parents. A proper channel of communication between the teacher and the parents can be of great help to the students.

2.2 Desists from doing anything which is derogatory to the respect of the child or his/her parents/guardians

Lowering the esteem of the child in front of other students can be hazardous. It is also important to treat equally children from different economic backgrounds and children belonging to different religions, regions, castes, disability categories, etc. The teachers should not make derogatory remarks against students belonging to different backgrounds. Equally dangerous is the lowering of the esteem of the parents in front of children. The socio-economic composition of students in a class is not homogenous as all students do not come from the same background. Any inadvertent tilt in the behaviour of the teacher in regard to favouring one type of student background and lowering another can cause emotional conflicts which can influence badly the process of learning. It is also necessary not to compare one child's performance with another. The child has to be encouraged to improve upon his/her own performance in areas where the child has shown his/her maximum potential and should not be forced to improve where he/she may not be interested.

2.3 Strives to develop respect for the composite culture of India among students

India is a land of many cultures, languages, religions, faiths and beliefs and in any class there is always a representation of children of different cultures, languages, religions. As a result of the long association and interaction among different cultural streams, a composite culture has evolved in the country, which has drawn the best from various strands. The value of composite culture requires equal tolerance and respect for all cultures of the land. This philosophy needs to be nurtured among students through all curricular areas of the school. The students must learn to appreciate that all religions and communities have contributed to the evolution of the composite culture. Teachers' personal approach in demonstrating respect for all is likely to produce the desired impact on the minds of the students.

2.4 Keeps the country uppermost in mind and refrains from taking part in such activities as may spread feelings of hatred or enmity among different communities, religious and linguistic groups

The pluralistic culture of the classroom is a complex reality. There can be issues that can influence divisiveness among the student communities. The teacher has an onerous responsibility in developing in the students, tolerance and equal respect for all religions, faiths and languages. A clear focus on developing the concept of being an Indian first and affiliation to a specific group later can lay the foundation for national integration. The Indian identity has pluralistic connotations and this must be instilled among students through example. A teacher should understand the difference between education and propaganda and in no case should use the platform of the school for the propagation of his/her personal views about different religions, regions or castes, if these are not in tune with the principles of our Constitution. While discussing current social and political conflicts in the country, the teacher should refrain from taking sides and should always present a balanced and objective view of the conflict.

3. Obligations towards the Profession and Colleagues

3.1 Strives for his/her continuous professional development

In a knowledge-driven society, it is necessary for every person to continue learning throughout his/her life. As a teacher is expected to equip his/her students for life long learning, it is imperative for him/her also to become a life long learner.

It is incumbent on the part of a teacher to strive continuously for his professional development in order to reap the benefits of the latest advancements in different areas of knowledge and also in their pedagogy, which will equip him/her to engage the students with updated knowledge by using modified pedagogical practices. The study of newspapers, magazines, professional journals and new books in his/her field of specialization; discussion with colleagues on different themes of education; undertaking research and experimentation, participation in study circles, seminars, conferences,

workshops, etc. and participation in INSET programmes through face to face or distance mode are some of the strategies which a teacher can use to grow professionally and also to move upwards in the professional hierarchy. The teacher's motivation to learn continuously not only helps him/her to grow professionally but it also helps to enrich the profession with innovative practices which may emerge as a result of research, experimentation, discussions, observations, etc.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to look for different avenues for his/her continued professional development. He/she should not expect the employers or the state to assume full responsibility for his/her professional development. However, he/she must take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the State by participating in the INSET programmes willingly and enthusiastically. He/she should also become internet savvy to explore new knowledge through search engines.

3.2 Creates a culture that encourages purposeful collaboration and dialogue among colleagues and stakeholders

It is essential to create an academically stimulating ethos in the school for which all the teachers are expected to contribute. Such an ethos involves planned and focused collaboration in all academic matters among teachers working in the institution. The collaboration may be in the execution of jointly planned projects and programmes such as projects to improve students' achievements in different spheres. There should also be an environment of free and frank dialogue and discussion among teachers to seek collective solutions to the problems of the institution and also to those of teachers and students. It should be a regular practice among teachers of an institution to sit together to reflect on the problems faced by them in curriculum transaction or in classroom management or in attending to children with learning disabilities or behaviour problems. Such discussions and interactions should become an essential component of school climate, as these have the potential to enable the teachers to construct their own knowledge about students and their learning and about desirable pedagogical practices.

Besides teachers, there are many other stakeholders in the reputation of the institution and of the teaching profession and also in the education of children, such as parents and representatives of the community. A teacher should constantly strive to seek their involvement in the affairs of the institution and discuss with them the problems, programmes and plans of the institution.

3.3 Takes pride in the teaching profession and treats other members of the profession with respect and dignity

A teacher should take pride in having joined the teaching profession and under no circumstances should express his/her disregard for the profession by repenting his/her decision. A teacher cannot give his/her best to the students and the community if he/she does not display the pride and dignity of the profession chosen.

A teacher must realize that all members of the teaching profession, irrespective of their academic and professional qualifications and whether they are pre-primary, primary or secondary school teachers, deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. A senior secondary school teacher holding postgraduate degree should treat the primary school teachers with equal respect irrespective of their working at a lower stage of education and in lower pay scales. In staff meetings, all teachers should be encouraged to express their views freely without any inhibitions and the views expressed by newly recruited or junior teachers should be given due importance. Even if the ideas expressed by the junior teachers are not acceptable, the senior teachers should refrain from rejecting them with disdain pointing out their lack of experience. A teacher should never try to belittle the abilities or potential of any teacher on the basis of age, sex, state or region to which he/she belongs. A teacher should do nothing to lower the reputation of other teachers due to feelings of jealousy or due to any other reason as the reputation of the profession depends to a large extent on the reputation of its individual members.

3.4 Refrains from engaging himself/herself in private tuition or private teaching activity

Teachers' engagement in private tuition has been a matter of controversy and there have been arguments both in its favour and also against it. There are persons who are not employed as full time teachers but work as full time private tutors. They are also expected to observe the professional ethics meant for teachers. But in the case of full time regular teachers, engagement in private tuition work affects the quality of their work in schools adversely. If a teacher is engaged in tuition work for three to four hours before or after school hours, it is likely to have an adverse effect on his school duties because the time he/she should have utilized for reading or for making preparations for teaching, is spent on giving tuitions. The teacher should not intentionally neglect his teaching duties hoping to attract students to seek his/her assistance after school hours. Giving private tuitions to one's own students may lead to violation of many ethical principles as the teacher is likely to develop a soft corner for such students and he/she may be tempted to favour them in many ways such as internal assessment, maintenance of school discipline, etc. and thereby may do injustice to other students who may not have sought his/her assistance through private tuition.

3.5 Refrains from accepting any gift or favour that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions

Teachers have to be role models for the students of the impressionable age. In case some students, out of respect and affection for the teachers, sometimes offer small gifts like flowers or greeting cards, these should be accepted with a smile. However, if a student tries to give some expensive gift to a teacher on some occasion and, in return, expects favour in the form of higher marks in the internal assessment or selection for participation in some sports tournament or literary and cultural competition, then the teacher should firmly refuse it. The teacher should not accept gifts or favours from the parents of the students, as it may influence his/her professional judgement about the students' performance in internal examinations or their candidature for participation in various events.

The teacher should also refrain from accepting gifts and favours from book publishers, sports material or science equipments suppliers as they would expect the teachers to recommend their books or help them in acquiring purchase orders for their materials. A teacher influenced by such gestures is likely to recommend at times purchase of sub-standard materials. The gifts may be in cash or kind and the favours may be in the form of transport facility, stay facility in a hotel or reimbursement of travel costs, and receiving them should be scrupulously avoided.

3.6 Refrains from making unsubstantiated allegations against colleagues and higher authorities

In bigger schools, with sizeable number of teachers, there is always a possibility that a teacher will have a circle of close friends. This is quite natural but it will be undesirable if it leads to formation of groups having mutually conflicting interests. It is often observed that in some cases, some teachers, make an attempt to seek favours from the school authorities and belittle other colleagues due to professional jealousy. This sort of behaviour is certainly unbecoming of a teacher.

It is also a practice at many places that some teachers submit representations or complaints against their colleagues. It will be unethical on the part of a teacher if he/she makes an allegation without proper and adequate evidence. Sometimes, a group of teachers draft a representation against a particular teacher, or higher authorities and then approach other teachers for their signatures. A teacher violates professional ethics if she/he puts signatures on the representation simply to oblige the teacher(s) who have approached him/her. It is incumbent on the part of a teacher to verify the contents of the complaint before becoming a party to it.

If a teacher observes some of his colleagues violating the ethical principles, he/she should bring it to the notice of the senior colleagues. In case a teacher is found abusing children sexually or instigating students of one community against students of another community, remaining silent by ignoring such incidents shall be undesirable and

violative of professional ethics. But the teacher should file complaints only when he/she has first hand knowledge of the said violation and in no case it should be based on mere heresy.

3.7 Avoids making derogatory statements about colleagues, especially in the presence of pupils, other teachers, officials or parents,

A teacher having difference of opinion with colleagues on purely professional matters is perfectly in order and indeed should be welcome. But the mode of expression of the difference in opinion should be polite and dignified. A teacher shall be violating principles of professional ethics if he/she criticizes or denounces the teaching style, dress sense, behaviour, caste, rural or urban background or professional competence of a colleague in the presence of pupils, parents, other colleagues and school officials. For instance, if a teacher makes the statement about another teacher that the person does not know how to teach or does not know A B C of the subject, he/she is certainly making an attempt to belittle the teacher in the eyes of pupils, parents or school officials, his/her act of doing so may be termed as unethical. However, in the meetings of the school staff or in the meetings of professional organizations, a teacher may raise issues regarding teaching styles and strategies suitable for specific concepts and in the process he/she may give concrete examples based on the teaching of other colleagues.

3.8 Respects the professional standing and opinions of his/her colleagues

In the teaching profession, some teachers are likely to be more professionally advanced in comparison to others. This may be due to their love of the latest educational literature, inclination for observation and experimentation; habit of undertaking analysis and reflection on educational issues and concerns; and the ability to form his/her views and communicate the same to others orally or in writing. A teacher should hold such professionally advanced fellow teachers in high esteem and resolve to emulate them. But, this does not mean that he/she should blindly accept their views without critical examination.

Every teacher is entitled to form opinions on all aspects of children's education and life in school, such as school administration, classroom management, school discipline and children's rights, prescribed curriculum, syllabi and text books, and articulate the same in different forums. Such views should be received with appreciation. The professionally advanced teachers or experienced teachers may not find enough merit in the views of younger teachers but they should refrain from rejecting their ideas in a harsh tone. Instead, assuming the role of mentors, they should politely point out the weaknesses in the views expressed by less experienced teachers.

3.9 Maintains confidentiality of information concerning colleagues and dispenses such information only when authorized to do so.

A teacher may be knowing many things about the life and conduct of his/her fellow teachers. Some information may be of confidential nature while some other may be of routine type involving no component of confidentiality. If a teacher has expressed his/her services for undertaking a specific task, there is no element of confidentiality in these facts as these are already in the public domain. However, if there is an allegation that a teacher has committed some irregularities in the maintenance of accounts of an activity or if a student makes a complaint that a particular teacher misused his/her position during an educational tour, the school authorities are likely to appoint an inquiry committee to probe the matter. While investigating the matter, the members of the committee are likely to obtain information of confidential nature from the teachers, students and officials. A teacher shall be violating the Code of Professional Ethics if he/she chooses to publicize the information obtained during the course of investigation.

A young teacher facing some sort of turmoil in his/her personal, social or professional life may decide to seek the emotional support of an elderly and senior teacher and in the process may divulge some confidential information. The teacher who has received the information shall be violating the ethical principles of teaching profession if he/she passes on the information shared in confidence to other teachers.

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Constitution of the Committee for developing the Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers.

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The Committee is authorized to co-opt one more expert if so desired.

Teacher's Oath

I _____ son/daughter of _____, solemnly declare that I shall always strive to raise the prestige and dignity of the teaching profession and shall not do anything which may affect the reputation of the profession adversely. I willingly bind myself to the observance of the 'Code of Professional Ethics for School Teachers', in letter and spirit in order to discharge a teacher's obligations towards students, parents, community and society as enunciated in the Code.

Date:

Signature

Name _____

Address _____
