

1. Details of Module and its structure

Module Detail	
Subject Name	Education
Paper Name	Educational Administration Management & Leadership in School Education
Module Name/ Title	Code of conduct of teachers and professional ethics
Module Id	e-PG EDN 13.19
Pre-requisites	Basic understanding of Educational Administration
Objectives	<p>After going through this content the learner will get abreast to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To define code of conduct and code of professional ethics. ● To explain how these codes are similar and different. ● To discuss the objectives of code of conduct ● To enlist major ethical issues ● To identify the criteria and main steps in the development of code of conduct ● To illustrate the observance of code and mechanism to deal with violations as per NCTE ● To examine the draft proposed by NCTE for Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers ● To expound the purposes of code of conduct and ethics ● To explain the disadvantages of codes
Keywords	Professional ethics, NCTE, code of conduct, moral values

2. Development Team

Role	Name	Affiliation
Principal	Prof. P.K. Sahoo	Department of

Investigator		Education, University of Allahabad, U.P.
Co-Principal Investigator	Prof. Rajaram S. Sharma	Central Institute of Educational Technology, NCERT, New Delhi
Co-Principal Investigator	Prof. Dhananjay Yadav	Department of Education, University of Allahabad, U.P.
Paper Coordinators	Prof. Vidya Agarwal,	Department of Education, University of Allahabad, U.P.
	Dr. J.S. Dhillon	Principal, Khalsa College of Education, Amritsar
Content Writer/Author (CW)	Dr. Mandeep Kaur	Khalsa College of Education, Ranjit Avenue, Amritsar
Content Reviewer (CR)	Prof. Surinder Kaur	Khalsa College of Education, Ranjit Avenue, Amritsar
Language Editor (LE)	Dr. Aerum Khan, Dr. Astha Saxena	Central Institute of Educational Technology, NCERT

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Summary

E-Text

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to scientific and technological developments, rethinking approaches to teaching and learning, explosion of knowledge, paradigm shift from teacher centred approach to learner centred approach, increased diversity in students population, changed students' personality, increased expectations of teachers and parents from students and increasing competitions among students has changed the role of teacher. The new role of teachers as 'professionals' can present us with some very unique ethical choices and ethical

principles governing the teaching profession. Thus, there is a need to establish a set of guidelines, a code, that a teacher must adhere to for improving ethics of the teaching profession and it must serve model for the students also. Ethical teaching is concerned with the questions of value, i.e. making judgments about “good” or “bad” behaviour in any given situation. The standards, values, morals, principles, etc. make ethics that guide one’s decisions or actions. In this module, we are mostly concerned about code of conduct and code of professional ethics for teachers. We shall discuss the steps to be followed for developing code of conduct. In addition, draft for professional ethics given by NCTE is also discussed followed by four-tier mechanism in case of non-observance of code.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this module, the students will be able to:

- define code of conduct and code of professional ethics
- explain how these codes are similar and different
- discuss the objectives of code of conduct
- list major ethical issues
- identify the criteria and main steps in the development of code of conduct
- examine the draft proposed by NCTE for Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers
- illustrate the observance of code and mechanism to deal with violations as per NCTE
- expound the purposes of code of conduct/ethics
- explain the disadvantages of codes

3. CODE OF CONDUCT AND CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Code of Conduct is essentially a set of professional ethical standards with which teachers are required to comply. It refers to the behaviour and ways of thinking of teachers in situations where a choice can affect the dignity and well being of others. It helps to provide direction and guidance to them in enhancing the dignity of their professional work. A code of conduct enforces teachers to abide the standards as a condition of ongoing employment. A code of conduct may help in smooth functioning of the institution.

A code of professional ethics is a document that outlines a set of principles, issued by a higher authority which affect decision-making and guide the teachers to discharge their

duty towards students, parents, colleagues and community. The formation and enforcement of a code of ethics makes the profession self-regulating and self-governing. The main objective of these ethics is to make the teacher aware about present and future impact of teaching on students' personality. The maintenance of ethical standards is the collective concern of the institute as well as all members of the profession. It is the responsibility of the school to not only instruct teachers how to teach in a democratic environment but also how to do so in an ethical manner. He should be held responsible for the ethical use of his powers. A code of ethics can guide him towards honourable and professional behaviour and also protect its members not to go against the professional rules.

Both Code of conduct and Code of ethics represent two of the most common ways of self-regulation. Code of ethics governs decision-making and code of conduct governs actions. Both codes provide direction to teachers. But both codes regulate teachers' behavior in different ways. A code of conduct/ethics that governs how the person to whom it applies conducts him or herself in an ethical manner. Ethical standards help the teachers in making independent judgments about the most appropriate course of action while conduct standards provide a fairly clear set of expectations about which actions are required, acceptable or prohibited. Generally, it is suggested that institutions must have both types of codes.

In any institution, code of conduct refers to written rules and regulations about how teachers have to behave in various situations. For example, if drugs/smoking/alcohol is not allowed inside the school premises, but an employee finds himself in a situation when there is no one around and there is no chance of him being caught by any one or camera, it is his decision not to smoke that comes within the purview of code of ethics and not code of conduct.

Many school teachers give private tuition at home. But there are examples of school teachers who do not offer coaching at home despite parents' demand. It is not that they are being stopped by law or head but their own code of ethics prevents them from doing so.

3.1 Objectives of Code of Conduct

Code of conduct is constructed with the objectives of:

1. Improving the quality of teaching
2. Inculcates the feeling of professionalism among teachers
3. Develop a positive attitude towards teaching profession
4. Helps the students against unethical conduct of teachers
5. Checks on teacher misconduct

6. Prevents violation of code of conduct
7. Serves as template for discussion and helps in improving the ethics of the teaching profession
8. Promotes public trust.

3.2 Criteria for the formation of Code of Conduct

Generally it is preferred that the Code of Professional Ethics should be prepared by the professional organisations of teachers so as to ensure its adherence as a self-imposed discipline.

Following are the criteria on which a code of conduct is formed:

1. Ethical student-teacher relationships
2. Ethical teacher-teacher relationships
3. Teacher's professional security and professional conduct
4. Terms of employment

3.3 Main steps in the development of code of conduct

Development of code of conduct follows a systematic process incorporating input from all areas of the institution. Generally, a committee comprising teachers from various streams is formed that will assist in the development of code addressing different areas which are essential for the institution. Following steps are generally followed to develop code of conduct:

1. Collecting information

The members of the committee collect the ideas and information which has to be included in the code. It is always good to start by examining the values mentioned in the school mission statement. The committee should consider areas that specifically pertain to the teaching. The areas may include conflicts of interest, personal and professional integrity, harassment, fraud, teacher taught relations, relation with the head, use of institution property, discrimination, confidentiality, etc.

2. Creating Draft

On the basis of information, basic content and structure of the code is determined which may help in developing a draft. An effective code of conduct should be written in simple language, should be positive, value-based document that must guide the teachers for appropriate behavior instead of displaying a list of rules and regulations that must be obeyed at all costs. It is very important that language used should be clear, concise and free of legal slang. Following format can be followed for drafting code of conduct:

- Identification of the areas such as conflicts of interest, discrimination, etc.

- Defining the area
- Objective of the area
- Guidelines that teachers should follow for making a decision when faced with a dilemma

3. Reviewing the Draft

First code draft undergoes a comprehensive review process to ensure that the areas discussed in the first step are covered or not. If there is need of editing, necessary edits are done. Try out is done on a group of teachers who are not otherwise involved in the code development process and feedback given by them is incorporated. The completed document is then submitted to head. Head of the institution may consult legal counsellor to ensure legal compliance.

4. Approving and introducing the code

The head of the institution after scrutinising the code provisions in detail approves it. For successful implementation of code of conduct, the introduction of a code of conduct is essential. It should be introduced properly so that each and every employee including the head of the institution should understand it.

5. Enforcing the code

A code of conduct in written form has no value unless it is enforced effectively.

4. MAJOR ETHICAL ISSUES

1. collecting illegal fees and funds from students
2. disclosing confidential school matters
3. taking drugs or alcohol in school premises
4. harassing the students
5. abusing the students
6. giving corporal punishment
7. coming to school under the influence of alcohol or drugs
8. sexually assaulting the student
9. damaging school property
10. stealing school property
11. getting appointment on the basis of fake degrees/certificates/qualification
12. giving bribery to higher authority
13. giving private coaching
14. remaining absent without informing
15. violating disciplinary norms

5. DRAFT OF CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS IS GIVEN BY NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TEACHER EDUCATION AS GIVEN BY NCTE

NCTE in collaboration with the All India Primary Teachers Federation (AIPTF), All India Secondary Teachers Federation (AISTF) and All India Federation of Educational Associations (AIFEA) developed a Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers, in 1997 which can be used as model by the teachers.

Following Draft of Code of Professional Ethics for School Teachers is given by National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE):

5.1 Preamble

Recognising:

- i. That every child has a fundamental right to education of good quality;
- ii. That every child has an inherent potential and talent;
- iii. That education should be directed to the all round development of the human personality;
- iv. The need for developing faith in the guiding principles of our polity, viz., democracy, social justice and secularism;
- v. The need to promote through education the concept of composite culture of India and a sense of national identity;
- vi. That teachers, being an integral part of the social milieu, share the needs and aspirations of the people;
- vii. The need to enhance self-esteem of teachers;
- viii. The need to organize teaching as a profession for which expert knowledge, specialized skills and dedication are pre-requisites;
- ix. That the community respect and support for the teachers are dependent on the teachers' professionalism; and
- x. The need for self-direction and self-discipline among members of the teaching community.

5.2 Obligations towards Students

A Teacher:

- i. Treats all students with love and affection.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Facilitates students Physical, social, intellectual, emotional, and moral development.
- iv. Respects basic human dignity of the child in all aspects of school life.

- v. Makes planned and systematic efforts to facilitate the child to actualize his/her potential and talent.
- vi. Transacts the curriculum in conformity with the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.
- vii. Adapts his/her teaching to the individual needs of students.
- viii. Maintains the confidentiality of the information concerning students and dispenses such information only to those who are legitimately entitled to it.
- ix. Refrains from subjecting any child to fear, trauma, anxiety, physical punishment, sexual abuse, and mental and emotional harassment.
- x. Keeps a dignified demeanour commensurate with the expectations from a teacher as a role model.

5.3 Obligations towards Parents, Community and Society

A Teacher:

- i. Establishes a relationship of trust with parents/guardians in the interest of all round development of students.
- ii. Desists from doing anything which is derogatory to the respect of the child or his/her parents /guardians.
- iii. Strives to develop respect for the composite culture of India among students.
- iv. 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.

5.4 Obligations towards the Profession and Colleagues

A Teacher:

- i. Strives for his/her continuous professional development.
- ii. Creates a culture that encourages purposeful collaboration and dialogue among colleagues and stakeholders.
- iii. Takes pride in the teaching profession and treats other members of the profession with respect and dignity.
- iv. Refrains from engaging himself/herself in private tuition or private teaching activity.
- v. Refrains from accepting any gift, or favour that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.
- vi. Refrains from making unsubstantiated allegations against colleagues or higher authorities.
- vii. Avoids making derogatory statements about colleagues, especially in the presence of students, other teachers, officials or parents.
- viii. Respects the professional standing and opinions of his/her colleagues.
- ix. Maintains confidentiality of information concerning colleagues and dispenses such information only when authorized to do so.

6. OBSERVANCE OF THE CODE

The enforcement of the Code of Conduct is the responsibility of the authority. One way is to provide a copy of the 'Code of Professional Ethics' to the teacher at the time of appointment so that he/she may observe it in all letter and spirit. However, there is possibility that some teachers may violate Code of conduct or some may partially adhere to it. Therefore, there is need to evolve a suitable mechanism that may ensure that all teachers of an institution must follow the ethical principles enshrined in the Code. Authority must take disciplinary action in case if any teacher violates the Code of conduct. But authority must keep in mind that action should be taken as per the magnitude and nature of the violation.

7. MECHANISM TO DEAL WITH VIOLATIONS AS PER NCTE

NCTE has evolved following four-tier mechanism to deal with the violations/ non-observance of the code:

1. School/ Block Ethics Committee

In the case of 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 level by the concerned Associations of teachers. It is the duty of the Committee to deal with the complaints regarding punctuality, regularity, completion of curriculum, engagement in private tuitions, etc.. At the initial level, the committee should try to persuade the erring teachers to mend their ways and warn them that if they do not mend their ways then the committee would not support them if some disciplinary actions are initiated against them by the authorities.

2. District Ethics Committee

The recognised Teacher Organisations/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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

8. PURPOSES OF CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

These codes seek to serve the following purposes:

1. To foster a culture of high standards of honesty, integrity, ethical and law-abiding behaviour among teachers
2. To encourage the observance of standards to protect and promote the interests of students and the institution
3. To set out the responsibility and accountability of teacher to report and investigate any reported violations of the code or unethical or unlawful behaviour
4. To instruct teachers about the standards of the school
5. To develop the ethical foundations of good teaching in his subject and considers major areas of ethical concern in teaching
6. To enable the teacher to deal consistently and fairly with all students in classroom
7. To ensure that teachers are interacting in a professional manner
8. To make the disciplinary process easier when unethical behaviour occurs
9. To serve as an instrument of self-regulation by acknowledging a responsibility on the part of teachers for the work that they do
10. To represent a status symbol that protects the profession
11. To function as a cornerstone of quality teaching by creating conducive learning environments

9. DISADVANTAGES OF CODE OF CONDUCT

However, code of conduct has many disadvantages also which are as follows:

Inequality

Generally it is observed that senior members of the institution are Code of conduct are exempted from certain codes that may result in the development of feeling of inequality.

Unethical Behaviour

Sometimes, codes of conduct may result in unethical behaviour among teachers as it restricts teachers from expressing their views against the head or institution if something wrong is happening. They have the fear that they may lose their job if they speak against the institution.

Lack of Stability

Code of conduct is developed keeping in view the values and mission statement of the institution. But, as current needs and desires change, the code of conduct also changes which may or may not be according to the values of the institution.

SUMMARY

This module discusses the concept of code of conduct and professional ethics for teachers. Code of Conduct is essentially a set of professional ethical standards with which teachers are required to comply. It refers to the behaviour and ways of thinking of teachers in situations where a choice can affect the dignity and well being of others. A code of professional ethics is a document that outlines a set of principles, issued by a higher authority which affect decision-making and guide the teachers to discharge their duty towards students, parents, colleagues and community. Both Code of ethics and Code of conduct represent two of the most common ways of self-regulation. Code of ethics governs decision-making and code of conduct governs actions. Both codes provide direction to teachers. But, both codes regulate teachers' behavior in different ways. A code of conduct/ethics that governs how the person to whom it applies conducts him or herself in an ethical manner. In the institution code of conduct is constructed with the objectives of improving the quality of teaching, inculcates the feeling of professionalism among teachers, envelope a positive attitude towards teaching profession, helps the students against unethical conduct of teachers, checks on teacher misconduct, prevent violation of code of conduct, serves as a template for discussion and helps in improving the ethics of the teaching profession and promotes public trust. Keeping in mind the major ethical issues, code of conduct is developed by following five steps-collecting information, creating a draft, reviewing the draft, approving and introducing the code and enforcing the code. Institutions can also develop the code of conduct as per the draft given by NCTE. Both codes are beneficial for the smooth functioning of the institutions as well as for the

improving the quality of teaching. In order to enforce the code of conduct effectively, it should be stable and should not promote inequality.

