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**DEFINITION(S):** The Professional Code of Ethics is a set of principles by which employees at the Council's Headquarter and its regional offices as well as Private Schools staff, members of the Board of Trustees and Owners ("Educators") are expected to abide. It consists of twelve professional and ethical standards which are to be met by all employees covered by the Professional Code of Ethics and forms the basis for the identification of best practice in professional and ethical conduct and any disciplinary action which a School may need to take against individual members of staff in case of non-compliance with the Professional Code of Ethics' standards.

**PURPOSE(S):** This policy is based firmly on the Council's core values of education (Policy (1)), which defines the conduct of the Council's employees, School staff and others who regularly deal with students in all procedures, which is:

- **Teamwork:** emphasizing the values of cooperation with others.
- **Integrity and honesty:** commitment to the right behaviors under any circumstances.
- **Transparency:** dealing with others in a clear, sincere and honest manner.
- **Respect:** respect for students, colleagues, Parents / Guardians and community.
- **Accountability:** the individual bears responsibility of his words and deeds.
- **Care and compassion:** caring for others and feeling of responsibility toward them.

This policy provides those who work in Private Schools with a firm set of principles to guide all of their professional practice and behavior. This policy also applies to Council employees as they interact with Private School students and their Parents / Guardians, School leaders, teachers, staff, members of the Board of Trustees and Private School Owners. Its purposes are:

- To establish a firm foundation for ethical and professional conduct in all Private Schools which are under the jurisdiction of the Council?
- To raise ethical and professional standards by giving all employees a clear vision of the behavior expected of them.

**POLICY:** The Council expects that Private Schools ensure that all employees understand, accept and embrace the principles enshrined in the Professional Code of Ethics, and thereby uphold high standards of ethical and professional practice and behavior in all their work and at all times. The Professional Code of Ethics has been adapted from the "ADEC Public Schools (P-12) Policy Manual" in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

The Council requires all Schools to prepare and distribute to all their staff a code of professional and ethical conduct that includes all of these principles. The School's code of conduct may also include other principles that are of specific relevance to the particular context and mission of that particular School within the framework of the Professional Code of Ethics.

The Council's Professional Code of Ethics consists of twelve standards for all Private School staff, members of the Board of Trustees, Owners, students and Parents/Guardians, as well as Council employees who work with Private Schools. The lists within each standard are intended as guidance and do not comprise a complete set of professional and ethical behaviors that are expected of staff. The main objective for the Council's employees in its headquarters and regional offices, as well as





Private Schools staff, members of the Board of Trustees and Owners, is to achieve the public good in regard to improving educational processes and outcomes, and also that staff who regularly interact with students share an individual and collective accountability for the effective education of students. For this reason, the term Educators is used throughout this Professional Code of Ethics to describe all of them.

The Council's Professional Code of Ethics for Private Schools includes the following standards:

**Standard 1 – Religion, culture, society's customs and traditions: Educators will respect the Religion of Islam; respect the Arabic culture and UAE society's values, morals, customs, and traditions.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Showing reverence to Islamic values and practices and respecting other religions.
- Complying with all principles imposed by the Islamic religion in the UAE.
- Respecting UAE society's values, morals, customs and traditions.
- Respecting the national symbols of the UAE. Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:
  - Behaving in a manner that is contrary to Islamic values in the classroom or other workplace.
  - Exhibiting disrespect toward UAE society's values, morals, customs and tradition.

**Standard 2 – Tolerance and respect for diverse cultures: Educators will foster an atmosphere of tolerance in Schools and the workplace.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Exhibiting tolerance and respect to individuals of different religious, ethnic or cultural backgrounds.
- Taking all necessary procedures to ensure that classrooms and other workplaces are free from all forms of harassment and discrimination.
- Treating all students and colleagues equitably, including those with special needs.

Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:

- Discriminating against or harassing colleagues or members of the public on the grounds of religion, race, origin, social status, age, gender or against pregnant employees or those with a newborn.
- Discriminating against or harassing students, on the grounds of religion, race, origin, social status, age or gender.
- Engaging in conduct that represents any kind of extremism or cultural indoctrination.

**Standard 3 – Dress code: Educators will dress appropriately in a manner consistent with official work attire and which does not contradict with UAE society's values, morals, customs and traditions.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- UAE nationals observing the appropriate national dress.
- Expatriates dress in a professional manner reflecting proper work attire.





Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:

- Wearing any clothing that is tight-fitting or revealing or unsuitable for the work environment.

**Standard 4 – Relationship with students: Educators will maintain a caring, professional relationship with all students, both inside and outside the classroom.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Educators behaving in ways that promote the welfare of the students and which affords them the necessary care, and taking all actions within their power to ensure students' safety.
- Educators reporting to relevant authorities if they suspect that a student is being harmed or may possibly be harmed.
- Educators working to meet the individual learning needs of all students and assisting them to achieve their potential and to develop their self-confidence.
- Educators striving to create a safe and supportive emotional environment for students to learn and enjoy learning; one that is conducive to their knowledge, values and abilities and does not cause intimidation or embarrassment.
- Educators striving to be fair and objective when dealing with students.
- Educators promoting student health through the support of School health services and the facilitation of School health programs and initiatives implemented in the School by the School nurse, the Council, or other government entities (e.g. National Immunization Program managed by HAAD), as approved by the Council.
- Educators being aware of, and complying fully with, all of the Council's regulations, policies and requirements related to student protection, health, care and welfare.

Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct includes for example:

- Engaging in or encouraging inappropriate relationships with students inside or outside of the classroom, including any behavior constituting sexual harassment or abuse.
- Sending any inappropriate messages, pictures or other communication to students inside or outside of the classroom.
- Using any form of discipline that involves corporal punishment, emotional or verbal abuse, or any punishment that may cause physical or emotional harm to students (e.g. ridiculing a student's point of view).
- Failure to discipline on-going bullying of a student (including cyber-bullying), which may result in physical or emotional harm to the student (see Policy (65)).
- Behaving negligently or making decisions which endanger student welfare.
- Using professional relationships with students for personal gain (e.g. private tutoring for students that are concurrently being taught by the teacher, asking for favors from the student's Parents/Guardians, etc.).
- Leniency in student grading, in a manner not consistent with the educational process.





**Standard 5 – Relationship with community: Educators will respect and cooperate with Parents / Guardians and the local community in their daily work to advance student learning.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Establishing open, honest and respectful relationships with Parents/Guardians and the local community.
- Involving Parents/Guardians and the community in the decision-making process relating to students education and wellbeing.
- Communicating all decisions relating to students' learning clearly and promptly to students, Parents/Guardians and stakeholders in the community. Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:
  - Disregarding the views and concerns of Parents/Guardians and the School community when making decisions about student learning.
  - Behaving in a rude or hostile manner when interacting with Parents/Guardians and the community.

**Standard 6 – Relationships with colleagues: Educators shall follow direction from direct supervisors and commit to collaborating with their colleagues in the best interest of students and the education profession.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Complying with all official instructions and decisions from their direct supervisors and from the relevant Council authorities.
- Encouraging and supporting colleagues to adopt and adhere to high professional standards.
- Collaborating with other Educators in a way that develops a positive, supportive professional environment for all.
- Assisting in the preparation and induction of new Educators through mentorship and guidance. Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:
  - Harassing a colleague verbally or physically, including any inappropriate behavior that makes a colleague feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
  - Spreading false statements or slandering the reputation of a colleague.
  - Revealing confidential information concerning a colleague.
  - Intentionally excluding a colleague from work-related or professional activities or work-related information.
  - Preventing colleagues from carrying out their official duties.

**Standard 7 – Communications: Educators will ensure that all interactions and communications with colleagues, students, Parents / Guardians and the public reflect the values of respect, wisdom, and integrity.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Ensuring that any public comments they make reflect the policies and priorities of their School and of the Council.





- Ensuring that usage of the Council communication systems (e.g. computers, phones, emails, ESIS) does not include any communication that may be controversial or offensive.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of information relating to students and colleagues unless disclosure is officially permitted and serves clear and specific professional purposes. Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:
  - Making comments or statements, in an official or unofficial capacity, that disparage the reputation of the Council, the School or colleagues.
  - Sharing confidential or sensitive information with any party, inside or outside of their School, who is not authorized to have the information.

**Standard 8 – Legal obligations: Educators will abide by government laws and regulations at all times and will be obligated to report violations of these laws to relevant authorities.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Maintaining honesty and integrity while conducting work.
- Being aware of, understanding and adhering to the provisions of legislation, laws and policies relevant to their work.

Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:

- Falsifying or misrepresenting professional qualifications or employment history.
- Willfully disobeying or disregarding any applicable laws.

**Standard 9 – Alcohol, drugs and tobacco: Educators will refrain from using, possessing, and being under the influence of alcohol and illegal drugs, and will not smoke in the workplace.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Abiding by government laws with respect to the substances stated above at all times.
- Refraining from providing alcohol or other drugs to students, or from encouraging students to consume them, or from disregarding students' use.
- School nurses supervising the administration of prescribed medications to students, and ensuring compliance with the Council's guidelines.

Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:

- Consuming or being intoxicated by alcohol or other drugs while performing duties.
- Smoking in School buildings and/or on the Council's premises.
- Encouraging students to use alcohol, tobacco or unauthorized drugs at any time.

**Standard 10 – Use of resources: Educators will use property and resources provided for their work efficiently and only for official/work-related purposes.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Complying with the Council's Information Security Policy relating to acceptable use of technology.
- Optimal usage of Council and School resources for work purposes to the extent necessary to carry out the assigned work.
- Maintaining assets and possessions entrusted to them (because of their work), and ensuring they





are used wisely and responsibly.

Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:

- Taking advantage of public or work-related resources for personal benefit (such as checking personal email) or for achieving personal gains or goals.
- Spending the Council's or the School's financial resources in a reckless or wasteful manner.

**Standard 11 – Conflicts of interest: Educators will avoid any situation that represents or may be perceived to represent a conflict of interest in carrying out their professional responsibilities and tasks.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Carrying out all responsibilities and taking all decisions in an objective and impartial manner
- Maintaining integrity and not accepting any bribes (gratuity), gifts, money or services that might impair or influence professional decisions.
- Refraining from using their position for personal gains.
- Reporting a potential conflict of interest to supervisors, and recusing themselves from situations giving rise to perceived conflict of interest.

Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:

- Involvement in any decisions in which family or friends may benefit.
- Accepting gifts from suppliers or local community members or gifts that may be given in an attempt to influence official work, other than those of nominal value (in most cases, a gift valued at over AED 100 will not be considered to be of nominal value).
- Using School time to conduct non-School business.

**Standard 12 – Sensitive issues: Educators will not make remarks regarding sensitive issues that could cause anger or discomfort among students, colleagues or the community.**

Professional conduct includes, for example:

- Ensuring that classroom discussions are focused on the subject being taught.
- Being careful when making comments (particularly in relation to potentially controversial matters, such as religion or politics).
- Preventing students from raising potentially controversial matters for group discussions.

Prohibited unprofessional conduct includes, for example:

- Engaging in conversation with students about sensitive issues - such as religion and politics – that do not serve any clear educational purpose and are not related to the School's approved curriculum.

School Owners, the Board of Trustees, sub-committee members, teachers and other School Faculty should abide by the Council's Professional Code of Ethics and its standards. In cases such Professional Code of Ethics is violated, the School will impose appropriate sanctions in accordance to the Council's regulations, policies and requirements. The sanctions imposed depend on the severity of the violation and the relevant staff's behavioral history.





## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

### Schools will: -

- Distribute a code of conduct that includes all the standards contained in the Professional Code of Ethics. Ensure that all Educators adhere to the Professional Code of Ethics.
- Encourage all staff to report serious violations of the Professional Code of Ethics to their Principal or direct supervisor and keeping all reports confidential.
- Offer awareness programs to ensure that all staff know and understand what is expected of them.
- Monitor compliance with the Professional Code of Ethics and take strict actions where there is evidence of non-compliance.
- Deal with any of the Professional Code of Ethics violations by imposing appropriate actions dependent on the violation gravity and the behavioral history of the employee.

