

Reading 9a

A code of conduct

South African Council for Educators

Notes

One of the most important means of ensuring professional accountability among teachers in South Africa (and of ensuring that such accountability is administered by teachers themselves) is the Code of Conduct of the South African Council of Educators (SACE). Introduced in 1997, the Code establishes the basic standards by which teachers' professional conduct may be judged. Note that the Code provides teachers with many positive guidelines on professional conduct as well as purely prohibitive rules.

Listen to your audiotape (Part 2) for a discussion of SACE's regulative function as well as its professional development function.

Reading

Preamble

1. The educators who are registered with the South African Council for Educators –
 - 1.1 acknowledge the noble calling of their profession to educate and train the learners of our country;
 - 1.2 acknowledge that the attitude, dedication, self-discipline, ideals, training, and conduct of the teaching profession determine the quality of education in this country;
 - 1.3 acknowledge, uphold, and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the Constitution of South Africa;
 - 1.4 commit themselves therefore to do all within their power, in the exercising of their professional duties, to act in accordance with the ideals of their profession, as expressed in the Code; and
 - 1.5 act in a proper and becoming way such that their behaviour does not bring the teaching profession into disrepute.

Conduct: The educator and the learner

This edited excerpt is taken from the South African Council for Educators. 1997. **Code of Conduct for Educators**. Pretoria: SACE.

2. An educator –
 - 2.1 respects the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and in particular children, which includes the right to privacy and confidentiality;
 - 2.2 acknowledges the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each learner, guiding and encouraging each to realize his or her potentialities;
 - 2.3 strives to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with those upheld in the Bill of Rights as contained in the Constitution of South Africa;
 - 2.4 exercises authority with compassion;
 - 2.5 avoids any form of humiliation, and refrains from any form of child abuse, physical or psychological;
 - 2.6 promotes gender equality and refrains from any form of sexual relationship with learners or sexual harassment (physical or otherwise) of learners;
 - 2.7 uses appropriate language and behaviour in his or her interaction with learners, and acts in such a way as to elicit respect from the learners;
 - 2.8 takes reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the learner;
 - 2.9 does not abuse the position he or she holds for financial, political, or personal gain;
 - 2.10 is not negligent or indolent in the performance of his or her professional duties; and
 - 2.11 recognizes, where appropriate, learners as partners in education.

Conduct: The educator and the parent

3. An educator, where appropriate –
 - 3.1. recognizes the parents as partners in education, and promotes a harmonious relationship with them; and
 - 3.2. does what is practically possible to keep parents adequately and timeously informed about the well-being and progress of the learner.

Conduct: The educator and the community

4. An educator recognizes that an educational institution serves the community, and therefore acknowledges that there will be differing customs, codes, and beliefs in the community.

Conduct: The educator and his or her colleagues

5. An educator –
 - 5.1 refrains from undermining the status and authority of his or her colleagues;
 - 5.2 promotes gender equality and refrains from sexual harassment (physical or otherwise) of his or her colleagues;
 - 5.3 respects the various responsibilities assigned to colleagues and the

- authority that arises therefrom, to ensure the smooth running of the educational institution; and
- 5.4 uses proper procedures to address issues of professional incompetence or misbehaviour.

Conduct: The educator and the profession

6. An educator –
 - 6.1 acknowledges that the exercising of his or her professional duties occurs within a context requiring co-operation with and support of colleagues, and therefore behaves in such a way as to enhance the dignity and status of the profession;
 - 6.2 keeps abreast of educational trends and developments;
 - 6.3 promotes the ongoing development of teaching as a profession; and
 - 6.4 accepts that he or she has a professional obligation towards the education and induction into the profession of new members of the teaching profession.

Conduct: The educator and his or her employer

7. An educator –
 - 7.1 recognizes the employer as a partner in education;
 - 7.2 acknowledges that certain responsibilities and authorities are vested in the employer through legislation, and serves his or her employer to the best of his or her ability; and
 - 7.3 refrains from discussing confidential and official matters with unauthorized persons.

Conduct: The educator and the council

8. An educator –
 - 8.1 co-operates with the South African Council for Educators to the best of his or her ability; and
 - 8.2 accepts and complies with the Disciplinary Powers and Procedures of the South African Council for Educators.