

## **Policy Code: 7205 Standards of Professional Conduct**

The professional educator acknowledges the worth and dignity of every person, demonstrates the pursuit of truth and devotion to excellence, acquires knowledge, and nurtures democratic citizenship. The professional educator exemplifies a commitment to the teaching and learning processes with accountability to the students, maintains professional growth, exercises professional judgment, and personifies integrity. The educator strives to maintain the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents, and legal guardians, and to serve as an appropriate role model.

### **I. Introduction**

A. The Board believes all employees should adhere to certain basic standards of professional conduct. The purpose of this policy and the rules contained herein is to define, establish and uphold generally accepted standards of professional conduct for teachers and all other employees, both licensed and classified. These rules shall be binding on all teachers, school administrators and all other employees.

B. Teachers, school administrators and all other employees shall adhere to the standards of professional conduct contained within this Policy. Failure to follow the standards in this Policy shall subject the teacher or other employee to investigation and possible disciplinary action by the Board and/or State Board of Education. The willful breach of the standards in this Policy shall subject a teacher or licensed employee to license suspension or revocation.

### **II. Standards of Professional Conduct**

A. Employees shall practice the professional standards of federal, state and local governing bodies, if any, appropriate to their position of employment .

B. Employees shall serve as positive role models at all times for students, parents, and the community. Because employees are entrusted with the care and education of small children and adolescents, all employees shall demonstrate a high standard of personal character and conduct at all times.

C. Employees shall acknowledge the diverse views of students, parents and legal guardians, and colleagues and shall not promote personal political or religious views.

D. Employees shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties including, but not limited to, the following:

1. statement of professional qualifications;
2. application or recommendation for professional employment, promotion, or licensure;
3. application or recommendation for college or university admission, scholarship, grant, academic award, or similar benefit;
4. representation of completion of college or staff development credit;
5. evaluation or grading of students or personnel;
6. submission of financial or program compliance reports submitted to state, federal, or other governmental agencies;

7. submission of information in the course of an official inquiry by the Board or State Board of Education related to facts of unprofessional conduct; however, an employee shall be given adequate notice of the allegations and may be represented by legal counsel if the employee so chooses; and

8. submission of information in the course of an investigation by a law enforcement agency, child protective services, or any other agency with the right to investigate, regarding school related criminal activity; however, an employee shall be entitled to decline to give evidence to law enforcement if such evidence may tend to incriminate the teacher or other employee as that term is defined by the [Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution](#).

E. Employees shall not solicit current students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the teacher or other employee in a private remunerative capacity.

1. A teacher or teacher assistant shall not tutor for remuneration students currently assigned to the class(es) of that teacher or teacher assistant; however, a teacher or teacher assistant may tutor students not assigned to that teacher's or teacher assistant's classes.

2. A teacher or other employee shall not accept any compensation, benefit, or thing of value other than his/her regular compensation for the performance of any service he/she is required to render in the course and scope of employment.

3. This provision shall not restrict performance of any overtime or supplemental services at the request of the Board or desire of the employee; nor shall it apply to or restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens of minimal value offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons in recognition or appreciation of service.

F. Employees, volunteers and independent contractors shall treat all co-workers, supervisors, students, and parents with respect. Such persons shall not commit any abuse act or sexual exploitation with, to, or in the presence of a student, whether or not that student is or has been under the care or supervision of that teacher or employee, as defined below:

1. any use of language that is considered profane, vulgar, or demeaning;

2. any sexual act;

3. any solicitation of a sexual act, whether written, verbal, or physical, including over the internet;

4. any act of child abuse, as defined by law;

5. any act of sexual harassment or harassment based on an employee's or student's gender, race, color, national/ethnic origin, handicap, age, or disability, as defined by law; and

6. any intentional solicitation, encouragement, or consummation of romantic or physical relationship with a student, or any sexual contact with a student. The term "romantic relationship" shall include dating any student.

G. Employees and independent contractors with access to confidential student records shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information regarding students or their family members that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure is

required or permitted by law or professional standards, or is necessary for the personal safety of the student or others.

H. Employees and independent contractors with access to personnel files and information shall maintain the confidentiality of this information as set forth in Policy 2125/7315 Confidential Information.

I. Employees shall not willfully or maliciously violate the constitutional or civil rights of a student, parent/legal guardian, or colleague.

J. Employees shall make any and all reports required by [Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes](#), if any, by the board, or by their principal or supervisor.

K. Employees shall not misuse public funds or property, funds of a school-related organization, or a colleague's funds. Employees shall account for funds collected from students, colleagues, or parents/legal guardians. Employees shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

L. Employees shall direct all complaints regarding the work environment to the appropriate supervisors and/or file grievances (see Policy 1750/7220 Grievance for Employees) instead of acting to undermine or diminish the authority of co-workers and supervisors.

M. Employees shall avoid confrontations with co-workers, including but not limited to, engaging in actions or conversations which the employee knows or should know will result in an actual disruption.

N. Employees shall respond to all parent inquiries, complaints and/or concerns in a timely and professional manner.

O. Employees shall comply with all administrative directives in a timely and professional manner, including written directives regarding specific issues or behaviors.

P. Employees shall perform all assigned and/or accepted instructional duties in a timely and professional manner.

Q. Employees shall participate in and complete any required professional development activities.

R. Employees shall participate in all required meetings in a professional manner.

S. Employees shall complete and transmit all required reports and other documentation in a timely and professional manner.

T. Employees shall arrive at work each day at an appropriate time designated by the supervisor ready and prepared to complete all assigned duties (7500 Workday and Overtime).

U. Employees shall be fully engaged in their job responsibilities during work hours.

V. Employees shall demonstrate respect for New Hanover County Schools and toward coworkers, supervisors, students, and parents.

W. Employees shall use school system equipment, time, and resources judiciously and as authorized.

X. Employees shall support efforts that ensure a safe and healthy work environment in

accordance with Policy 1510/4200/7270 School Safety.

Y. Employees shall meet or exceed established job performance expectations.

Z. Employees shall ensure dignity and nondiscrimination in schools by not teaching students or compelling students, teachers, administrators, or other school employees to affirm or profess belief in the concepts that:

1. One race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex;
2. An individual, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive;
3. An individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race or sex;
4. An individual's moral character is necessarily determined by his or her race or sex;
5. An individual, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex;
6. Any individual, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex, should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress;
7. A meritocracy is inherently racist or sexist;
8. The United States was created by members of a particular race or sex for the purpose of oppressing members of another race or sex;
9. The United States government should be violently overthrown;
10. Particular character traits, values, moral or ethical codes, privileges, or beliefs should be ascribed to a race or sex or to an individual because of the individual's race or sex;
11. The rule of law does not exist, but instead is a series of power relationships and struggles among racial or other groups;
12. All Americans are not created equal and are not endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and
13. Governments should deny to any person within the government's jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.

Cross References: 7300 Staff Responsibilities; 7239 Work Place Relations; 4040/7310 Staff Student Relations; 7500 Workday and Overtime; 1510/4200/7270 School Safety.