

NUT CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Any code of professional ethics for teachers should be valid for all teachers regardless of their position in the hierarchy of the organisation, the school or education service. It may be, however, that certain aspects will apply to headteachers or heads of department more than others because of the nature of the responsibilities they carry and their management function within the school. The following statement is intended for the general guidance of members.

1. All teachers should observe confidentiality in respect of any discussions with other individual teachers about their professional problems and difficulties.
2. If a teacher experiences any concern or dissatisfaction in relation to a colleague's conduct or standard of work the teacher should discuss the issue informally and in confidence with the colleague concerned. Where the issue is not resolved informally the teacher should take no further action without informing the colleague. Should the teacher have reason to believe that a colleague is acting in a way which might be harmful to the school or to individual pupils then there is a clear duty to make a report to the headteacher.
3. Teachers should not denigrate their colleagues in the presence of third parties: nor should a teacher adversely criticise a colleague in the presence of others save in the context of appropriate procedures
4. Effective consultation between teachers takes place in an atmosphere of mutual respect for the professional expertise and a recognition and understanding of the various responsibilities, of those involved. Teachers should be able to express freely their considered professional opinions while recognising the responsibilities borne by colleagues.
5. Teachers with responsibility for the organisation of the work of other colleagues should ensure that all members of staff have knowledge and a clear understanding of the duties and responsibilities to which they are allocated and of the procedures and practices relevant to the day to day operation of the school.
6. If changes are to be made in the organisation of a school on a short or a long term basis, they should be preceded by consultation with the teachers concerned and there should be clear and adequate information supplied to the teachers before their implementation. In this respect it must be recognised that sometimes decisions have to be made as matters of urgency without prior consultation.
7. Parents making complaints or allegations concerning teachers should be referred to the headteacher. The headteachers should take no action concerning the complaint or allegation until there has been consultation with the teacher concerned.
8. All members of staff should be able to make full use of the staff facilities, including staff rooms and study rooms. It is reasonable, however, for the headteacher to respect the right of the staff to hold discussions in his or her absence if they so wish.
9. Teachers have access to confidential information which may be provided by any one of, or combination of, a number of resources. Reports on children are received from parents, social workers, educational welfare officers, police, local authority officers, teachers, doctors and medical officers of health and others. Teachers must use their professional judgement regarding the confidentiality of such information, bearing in mind the requirements of the law and the best interests of the children. The headteacher or a senior official of the local education authority should be consulted before decisions are taken concerning the divulgence of confidential information.
10. While it is recognised that pupils will from time to time discuss their work and progress with teachers, particularly those teachers who undertake pastoral care, teachers should ensure that they maintain the delicate balance between taking a close interest in the welfare of pupils and the avoidance of entering into discussions about the conduct, competence or efficiency of other teachers.
11. Canvassing for the purpose of achieving an appointment, whether done directly or through an agent, is unethical.

12. The growth of a friendly relationship between teacher and pupil which is based on mutual respect and recognition of the role that each plays in the learning situation is desirable. It is, however, an abuse of this professional relationship for a teacher to:
 - a. enter into an improper association with a pupil;
 - b. show undue personal favour or disfavour towards a pupil;
 - c. commit such acts against a child which are illegal;
 - d. endeavour to exert an undue influence with regard to personal attitudes, opinions or behaviour which are in no way connected with the work of the school.

13. No teacher should delegate to an unqualified person duties or functions requiring the professional knowledge and skill of a qualified teacher. This statement is not intended to restrict in any way:
 - a. the proper training of teachers;
 - b. the use and employment of instructors subject to Schedule 2 of the Education (Teachers) Regulations 1993;
 - c. the reference to the professional staff of supporting services; or
 - d. the deployment of support staff in their statutory role of supporting and assisting the work of qualified teachers.

14. A teacher should not deliberately behave in such a way as to bring his or her school in disrepute.

15. A teacher should not behave in a racially discriminatory manner or make racist remarks directed towards or about ethnic minority groups or members thereof.