

Code of Ethics for Minnesota Teachers and
Code of Ethics for Minnesota Administrators
Explanation and Overview

What are the Codes of Ethics?

The Codes of Ethics are sets of principles defining professional conduct. They apply to all licensed teachers and administrators. ***THEY HAVE THE FORCE AND EFFECT OF LAW.*** Ten standards are listed for teachers and eleven for administrators.

Code of Ethics for Teachers

A teacher shall:

1. provide professional educational services in a non-discriminatory manner.
2. make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to health and safety.
3. disclose confidential information about individuals only when compelling professional purpose is served or when required by law.
4. take reasonable disciplinary action in exercising the authority to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.
5. not use professional relationships with students, parents, and colleagues to private advantage.
6. delegate authority for teaching responsibilities only to licensed personnel.
7. not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter.
8. not knowingly falsify or misrepresent records or facts relating to that teacher's own qualifications or to other teachers' qualifications.
9. not knowingly make false or malicious statements about students or colleagues.
10. shall accept a contract for a teaching position that requires licensing only if properly or provisionally licensed for that position.

Code of Ethics for Administrators

A school administrator shall:

1. provide professional educational services in a non-discriminatory manner.
2. take reasonable action to protect students and staff from conditions harmful to health and safety.
3. take reasonable action to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.
4. not misuse professional relationships with students, parents and caregivers, staff, or colleagues to private advantage.
5. disclose confidential information about individuals only when compelling professional purpose is served in accordance with state and federal laws, and school district policies.
6. not knowingly falsify or misrepresent records or facts relating to the administrator's qualifications, or to the qualifications of other staff or personnel.
7. not knowingly make false or malicious statements about students, students' families, staff, or colleagues.
8. not accept gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgement, nor offer any favor, service, or item of value to obtain special advantage.
9. only accept a contract for a position when licensed for the position or when a school district is granted a variance.
10. in filling positions requiring licensure, employ, recommend for employment, and assign only appropriately licensed personnel, or persons for whom the school district has been granted a variance.
11. not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties.

Ethical Misconduct

Who may make a complaint?

Any person may bring a charge of ethical misconduct against a teacher or administrator. Complaints are made to the Minnesota Board of Teaching. If the complaint is received orally, the person making the complaint will be asked to put the complaint in writing.

What happens if a complaint is made?

1. An investigation of the alleged violation is made.
2. An attempt may be made to correct improper activities through conference, conciliation, or persuasion.
3. The Board of Teaching may schedule a disciplinary hearing depending upon the outcome of the investigation and whether attempts at correction produce satisfactory results.

What penalties may be used if a violation is proven?

The Board of Teaching may impose one or more of the following penalties, but only after all previous efforts at remediation have been exhausted.

1. There may be an agreement between the Board of Teaching and the teacher or the administrator which would suspend or terminate the proceedings on conditions agreeable to both parties.
2. A letter of censure from the Board of Teaching may be sent to the teacher or administrator determined to be in violation of the standards.
3. The teacher or administrator may be placed on probationary licensure status for a period of time. Expectations for improvement may be imposed. The teacher's or administrator's performance and conduct will be subject to review by the Board of Teaching. Before the designated period ends, the status of the probationary period will be reviewed and a decision will be made to terminate or extend the probationary licensure status, or to impose further discipline.
4. The license of the person in violation may be suspended for a period of time.
5. The license of the person in violation may be revoked.

What rights do I have as a teacher if a complaint is brought against me?

You will be notified in writing of the complaint. You are entitled to be represented by your own legal counsel or other representative at each stage of the investigation and hearing.

What should I do if I receive notification of a complaint?

Call the SCEA office immediately! Do not answer any questions or fill out any forms from the Board of Teaching or its investigator until you have obtained professional advice. We will make sure you are appropriately informed, represented, and protected.