



The Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union

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CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

PREAMBLE

The success or failure of a community depends mainly on the strength of its educational system. The educational system, in turn, depends mainly on the contributions made by the members of the teaching profession. It is necessary, therefore, that the members of that profession should be constantly aware of the importance of education and of the extent to which they affect the life of the community, and of the implications of their professional obligations.

This Code of Professional Conduct aims at keeping the foregoing in the forefront of the minds of the teachers, but, like any set of rules, it lays down the principal guidelines and should not be regarded as being all-embracing.

The Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union will, as the occasion arises, make additions and/or alterations as to what is deemed as Professional and Unprofessional Conduct.

N.B. The term 'teacher' shall mean members employed in such schools and educational institutions as the Executive shall from time to time determine.

ARTICLE I - The Teacher and The Profession

1. The Teacher should be always mindful of the importance of the vocation and of the need for complete dedication to the betterment of mankind.
2. The Teacher should make a constant effort to improve professionally.
3. The Teacher should be an active member of those organisations which promote the interests of education and the welfare of the teaching profession.
4. The Teacher should encourage those with the capabilities to be good teachers to enter and/or remain in the teaching profession.

ARTICLE II -The Teacher and The Nation

1. The Teacher should espouse the dignity of the human person and an unshakable faith in fundamental human rights and freedoms.
2. The Teacher shall foster positive thinking and attitudes, self-denial, the spirit of toleration, respect for the law and authority and a devotion to duty, freedom and social justice.
3. The Teacher should believe in the efficacy of cooperative action and collective thinking and promote their growth and use in the solution of problems.
4. The Teacher shall promote the idea that all forms of lawful employment are meaningful, dignified and honourable provided that the employees' capabilities are suited to the nature of the job, and provided that the employee always attempts to improve the quality of his/her service.
5. The Teacher shall attempt to raise the cultural level of the community.

ARTICLE III -The Teacher and The Student

1. The Teacher shall realise that his/her prime consideration and concern shall be for the interests and welfare of his/her students.
2. The Teacher shall act with humanity, dignity and discretion at all times in his/her relations with students, and shall not exploit the teacher-student relationship for the purpose of racial, political and religious propaganda.
3. The Teacher shall, apart from imparting knowledge, aid parents and guardians in directing his/her students towards achieving ends that are accepted by society.

4. The Teacher shall neither advertise his/her institution nor canvass for scholars either personally, by means of the school staff, by circular, through the news media, or by any other means, to the detriment of other institutions.

ARTICLE IV - The Teacher and His/Her Colleagues in the Profession

1. It is unprofessional for any teacher to censure or criticise other teachers or their work in the hearing of students.
2. No Teacher shall make an adverse report to anyone on the work or conduct of another Teacher without first acquainting that Teacher with the nature and contents of the report. If the report is a written one, then the Teacher involved shall be allowed to make a copy of it.

N.B. This does not apply to instances in which one Teacher gives the name of another Teacher as a referee.

3. It is unprofessional for any teacher to force, or attempt to force, another Teacher to perform outside of normal school hours any duty or task which is not essentially connected with the normal work and organisation of the school.
4. It is unprofessional for any teacher to impose, or attempt to impose on another teacher out of normal school hours an excessive and unreasonable quantity of work of any kind.

ARTICLE V - The Teacher and The Employer

1. The Teacher shall know the terms of employment and shall honour those terms - unless instructed not to do so by the Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union, which is a Trade Union.
2. The Teacher shall apply for posts through the normal official channels. It is unprofessional for any teacher to lobby or canvass for appointments, either for himself/herself or for another teacher.

MEMORANDUM ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The following is an edited version (dated March 1, 1990) of various extracts from some of the memoranda on professional conduct issued since 1984.

The Union expects its members to conform at all times to the highest professional standards, and to encourage their colleagues to do likewise. Accepted practices and time-honoured methods should continue but the Union takes the view that teachers from time to time need to be reminded of their obligations and draws the following to their attention:

1. It is the obligation of teachers on the school premises to go to their classes promptly and instruct their students.
2. Teachers should not plead illness as an excuse for non-attendance at school and then use that time to attend to personal business not related to their illness. Teachers who habitually put personal business ahead of commitment to their job place excessive strain on their colleagues who are called upon to substitute for them.
3. Teachers should:
 - (a) attend staff meetings especially those held during school hours;
 - (b) regard it as part of their duty to attend meetings of their school's Parent-Teacher Association and Form-Level meetings with parents.
4. It is reasonable for any Principal to instruct teachers to assist in the supervision of students at assembly.

Any teacher may at any time withdraw from that part of assembly which involves worship, but may reasonably be asked to supervise students who are excused from taking part in corporate worship.
5. The Form Teacher has a vital part in the structure of the school. He should interpret his role as one of great responsibility, since its effectiveness depends on his performance.
6. It is reasonable for the taking of attendance to be delegated to the Form Teacher. Failure to perform any such delegated function may be construed as negligence.
7. The Union cannot emphasize too much the legal implications of an attendance register which is evidence of a student's physical presence on the school premises at a given time. This is, in effect, proof of the school's liability towards that student from that time.
8. Comments on the academic potential of students should be based on an objective analysis of their work. Such comments should be constructive and in no case derogatory.
9. It is a statutory obligation to supervise students for the official period of their instruction and therefore teachers should not dismiss their class before the end of that period. Should anything untoward happen, the administration may choose to regard such an early dismissal as negligence.
10. If a teacher for any reason puts a student out of his class as a form of punishment, the student must remain within eye-shot unless directed to report to the Principal or another teacher. The teacher is still responsible for the supervision of that student and must be in a physical position to exercise that supervision.

11. It is unprofessional for a teacher:
 - (a) to censure another teacher on his work in the hearing of students or colleagues; and
 - (b) to speak adversely about his colleagues with his students.
12. No report should be made on any teacher without providing that teacher with a copy of the report at the same time as the report is being made.
13. Any teacher who has prior knowledge of the content of any examination, internal or external, is obligated to treat such knowledge with complete confidentiality.
14. There is a legal obligation upon any adult who has factual knowledge of sexual activity involving minors to report the matter to the relevant authorities. The age of consent is sixteen.
15. The foregoing generally will not apply to information volunteered in confidence by a child who has been a participant in such activity. The child would have to be persuaded that the information volunteered should be made known to those with the legal authority to deal with such matters before such information could be passed on.
16. The Union is concerned about the vulnerability of teachers to accusations of sexual advances to students. Teachers should avoid any action both on and off the school premises which could lead to suspicion or rumour of any kind of physical liaison between themselves and students irrespective of age or sex.

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