

# Professional ethics for the teaching profession

We are a profession of teachers and leaders in early childhood education and in primary and secondary schools. Our political mandate is to promote learning, development and building of character for all children and pupils.

Our values, attitudes and actions influence the impact of our work. These ethical principles constitute a common ground for the development of our ethical awareness. It is our responsibility to act in accordance with these values and principles.

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## Basic values of the teaching profession

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### **Human values and human rights**

Our work is founded on values and principles set down in universal human rights, especially the UN convention on the rights of children. These rights must be promoted and defended in early childhood education and in schools. The inviolability of human individual freedom and the need for safety and care are fundamental.

### **Professional integrity**

Ethical consciousness and high professional competence are the basis of the profession's integrity and are essential in creating good conditions for play, learning and bildung. Our right to methodological freedom and our professional discretion gives us a special responsibility to be open about our academic and pedagogical choices. Society should be confident that we use our professional autonomy both properly and ethically.

### **Respect and equality**

Each individual person's personality and integrity must be met with respect. No form of oppression, indoctrination or prejudiced opinions shall be tolerated. All children in early childhood education and all pupils in schools have a right to participate and have their views heard and taken into account. They shall have a right to freedom within the framework of the education community.

### **Privacy**

Adherence to confidentiality and information standards is crucial in our work. Everyone has a right to privacy. Personal information must be managed in ways that protect the integrity and dignity of children, pupils, parents and colleagues. Electronic information dissemination requires a special critical awareness.

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## Ethical responsibility of the teaching profession

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### – in our work with children, pupils and parents

Our responsibility is to build a trusting relationship with those we work for and with. Our loyalty rests with the children and the pupils, to promote what is in their best interest. Truthful communication of knowledge and high quality pedagogical facilitation is essential.

#### All teachers and leaders of pedagogical institutions:

- *promote the possibility to play, learning and bildung for all children and pupils*
- *work to be up to date academically and pedagogically*
- *are caring and are aware of the power we have by virtue of our position*
- *are academically sound and ethically aware in evaluation work*
- *promote equality*
- *meet children, pupils and parents with respect*
- *intervene and protect children and pupils against violations, regardless of who the violator is*
- *meet criticism with openness and well founded professional arguments*

### – in the work place

We are knowledgeable, responsible and present grown-ups in children's and pupils' lives. As a professional community we have a common responsibility to develop good education and to promote and develop our professionalism.

#### The professional community:

- *initiates ethical reflection and dialogue with all employees at the work place*
- *cooperates to further develop knowledge, competences and ethical judgment, both internally and in interaction with relevant institutions in higher education and research*

- *creates and participates in a culture of positive cooperation where all opinions are treated seriously*
- *is loyal to the goals and regulations governing their institution as long as these are in line with the political mandate and our professional ethics*
- *works in a culture of openness and facilitates transparency*
- *respects the competence of other professions and acknowledge the limits of one's own disciplinarity*
- *supports and takes responsibility when colleagues meet special challenges in their work*
- *takes responsibility to find good solutions, and, if necessary highlights unacceptable conditions when they are discovered in the work place*

### – for early childhood education and schools as public institutions

We are committed to the values of early childhood institutions and schools as these are set down in regulations decided by legal democratic institutions. The individual teacher and leader share the profession's responsibility to advance the purposes and goals of education.

#### The profession:

- *shows courage and defends our political mandate*
- *use the freedom of speech actively and participates in relevant academic discussions and in policy debates on education*
- *take responsibility to warn authorities and the public when poor framework causes unacceptable conditions for children and pupils*
- *strive for good cooperation, but not by taking over responsibilities that are part of other professions' expertise*
- *do not compromise the values of the political mandate, our professional knowledge or our ethical values*

**Teachers and leaders in education are committed to the professional ethics and can never shirk their professional responsibilities.**