

Policy Statement

Professional Code of Conduct

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to establish the code of conduct that will guide behavior and professional practice. This policy will apply as a mandatory obligation for:

- All ADEC employees working in a school
- All ADEC regional or central employees who regularly interact with students

The policy also indicates the key ways in which the code of conduct will be disseminated and enforced

POLICY: The Abu Dhabi Education Council holds six core values at the center of its work. These core values must define the conduct of ADEC professionals in all actions:

- **Teamwork:** Emphasizing the virtues of cooperation and coordination
- **Integrity:** Doing the right thing no matter what the circumstances may be
- **Transparency:** Maintaining open, true and honest communications and actions
- **Respect:** Respecting children, colleagues, parents and community
- **Accountability:** Taking personal responsibility for action
- **Compassion:** Caring and showing responsibility toward others

To support these core values in all day-to-day work, ADEC has developed a Professional Code of Conduct. The Professional Code of Conduct outlines 12 specific standards that define the behavior ADEC requires.

All ADEC employees who are subject to this policy will be responsible for understanding the Professional Code of Conduct and upholding the standards of professional behavior in all their work. Employees will be required to provide their signature attesting that they have reviewed the Code of Conduct and are committed to following it.

Violations of the Professional Code of Conduct will be addressed with disciplinary action consistent with ADEC HR policies and procedures. The disciplinary action taken will depend on the severity of the violation and the employee's record of previous conduct.

ADEC employees are encouraged to report serious violations of the Professional Code of Conduct to their school Principal or manager. All such reports will be kept confidential.

DEFINITION: For the purposes of this policy, "Educator" is defined as any ADEC employee who works in a school, or whose job involves regularly interacting with students

REFERENCES: *ADEC HR Policies and Procedures*
Regulations of the Civil Service Law, 2006
ADEC Information Security Policy, 2009

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Whether they are working inside or outside the classroom, education professionals accept the public trust and the magnitude of responsibility inherent in their work. ADEC education professionals share a special duty of care toward the students in the Abu Dhabi schools. Employees are accountable through the Director-General to the Government of Abu Dhabi and to the community at large for the effective education of students and for the efficient use of government funds and resources entrusted to the delivery of education in the Abu Dhabi Emirate.

The Professional Code of Conduct is comprised of 12 standards that set the foundation of professional practice for employees to honor and follow. Each standard is followed by specific examples of professional and unprofessional conduct. However, the lists within each standard are only meant to be a guide, and are not a complete set of behaviors that may be considered professional or unprofessional.

Ultimately, employees are responsible for their own actions and decisions. Educators must use their judgment to ensure that their decisions and actions meet the standards of conduct outlined in this policy. If an educator is unsure whether an action or decision is acceptable, they should seek the advice of their supervisor before proceeding.

The 12 specific standards in this Professional Code of Conduct will apply to the following groups of employees:

- All ADEC employees working in a school
- All ADEC regional or central employees who regularly interact with students

This Professional Code of Conduct refers to these two groups as “Educators.” This title reflects ADEC’s belief that all employees must be regard improved student learning as the ultimate objective of their work, and that employees who regularly interact with students share a special individual and collective accountability for the effective education of Abu Dhabi students.

Standard 1 – Relationship with Students:

Educators will maintain a caring, professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will behave in ways that promote the welfare of the students, taking all actions within their power to protect student safety
- Educators must be aware of, and comply with, all ADEC child protection policies
- Educators are obligated to report to relevant authorities if they suspect a student child is being or will be harmed.
- Educators will meet the individual learning needs of students, and assist all students to maximize their potential.

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Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Engaging or encouraging inappropriate relationships with students in or outside of the classroom, including any behavior constituting sexual harassment or abuse
- Sending any inappropriate messages, pictures, or other communication to students in or outside of the classroom
- Using any form of discipline that involves corporal punishment, unnecessary or excessive verbal harassment, or that may cause physical or emotional harm to students
- Taking actions or behaving negligently in ways that endanger student welfare

Standard 2 – Relationship with Community:

Educators will respect and cooperate with parents and the community in their daily work to advance student learning.

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will involve parents and/or community in the decision-making about the care and education of their children
- Educators will communicate all decisions promptly and openly to students, parents, and members of the community with a right to know
- Educators will establish open, honest and respectful relationships with parents and community.

Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Failing to include the perspective of parents and/or community members when making decisions about student learning
- Behaving in a rude or hostile manner when interacting with parents and community

Standard 3 – Relationship with Colleagues:

Educators will follow direction from supervisors, and collaborate with their professional colleagues in the interest of student learning and the education profession.

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will comply with all lawful directions and decisions from their supervisors or the delegated ADEC authority
- Educators will encourage and support colleagues to build and maintain high professional standards.
- Educators will work with each other in a way that develops a positive, supportive professional environment.
- Educators will assist in the preparation and induction of new educators through mentorship and guidance

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Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Harassing a colleague verbally or physically, including any inappropriate behavior that makes a colleague feel uncomfortable or unsafe
- Making false statements or slandering the reputation of a colleague.
- Revealing confidential information concerning a colleague.
- Intentionally excluding a colleague from work-related or professional activities.
- Limiting the access of colleagues to do their official work

Standard 4 – Communications:

Educators will ensure that all interactions and communications with colleagues, students, and the public display respect, discretion, and integrity

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will ensure that any public comments they make reflect the policies and priorities of ADEC
- Educators will ensure that usage of ADEC communication devices (computers, phones, etc.) does not include any communication that may be controversial or offensive
- Educators will keep in confidence information regarding students and colleagues unless disclosure is permitted and serves a clear professional purpose

Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Making public comments, especially outside of an official capacity, that disparage the reputation of colleagues or ADEC generally
- Making public comments to the media (including radio, television, newspapers, books, or other means expected to reach the community at large) without authorization from the responsible ADEC department
- Sharing confidential or sensitive information with any party, in or outside of ADEC, that is not authorized to have the information

Standard 5 – Legal Obligations:

Educators will abide by government laws and regulations at all times and will be obligated to report violations of these laws to appropriate authorities.

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will be honest and maintain integrity in dealing with all official work.
- Educators will be familiar with the provisions of legislation and/or policies relevant to their official responsibilities.

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Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting professional qualifications or employment history.
- Omitting a past criminal record.
- Willfully disobeying and/or disregarding any government laws.

Standard 6 – Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco:

Educators will refrain from using, possessing, and/or being under the influence of alcohol and unauthorized drugs / substances in the workplace

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will abide by government laws with respect to the above stated substances at all time.
- Educators will never give students alcohol or other drugs, nor will they encourage or condone the use of alcohol or other drugs by students
- Educators will administer and/or supervise the administration of prescribed medications consistent with ADEC guidelines

Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Intoxication with alcohol or other drugs while performing duties.
- Smoking in ADEC buildings and/or school grounds except in designated areas
- Soliciting, administering or providing alcohol, tobacco or unauthorized drugs to students at any time.

Standard 7 – Use of Resources:

Educators will use the property and resources provided to them for their work efficiently and only for the purposes entrusted to them.

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will be expected to use ADEC and school resources efficiently and for the official purpose to which they are assigned.
- Educators must be aware of and comply with current ADEC policy on Information Security and acceptable use of technology
- Educators will be expected to honor public funds and property entrusted to them and to practice responsible stewardship.

Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Using public or work-related resources for personal purposes or personal gain
- Spending ADEC financial resources in a reckless or wasteful manner

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Standard 8 – Conflicts of Interest:

Educators will avoid any situation that represents or may be perceived to represent a conflict of interest in carrying out their professional responsibilities

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will carry out all responsibilities and take all decisions with fairness and impartiality
- Educators will maintain integrity regarding the acceptance of any gratuity, gift, compensation or favor that might impair or influence professional decisions
- Educators will refrain from using their position for personal gain
- Educators will report to their supervisor when a perceived conflict of interest may exist, or will remove themselves from the situation creating the conflict of interest

Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Involvement with an official decision in which family or friends may benefit
- Providing paid tutoring or coaching services to students an educator is responsible for teaching
- Accepting a gift from vendors or community members that is more than of a nominal value, or that are suspected to be an attempt to influence official behavior (In most cases, a gift valued at over AED 100 will be considered more than of a nominal value)

Standard 9 – Local Culture:

Educators will understand and respect UAE culture and Islamic values

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will respect Islamic values and practices in the classroom or workplace.
- Educators will comply with all rules and customs deemed by an Islamic state.
- Educators will respect UAE customs and traditions in schools or workplace.

Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Knowingly behaving in a manner that is contrary to Islamic values in the classroom or workplace.
- Knowingly exhibiting disrespect for UAE culture and customs in the classroom or workplace.

Standard 10 – Standard of Dress:

Educators will dress in an official, professional manner, consistent with formal business attire and UAE customs and traditions

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators who are Expatriates will dress in an official manner reflecting business attire

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- Educators who are UAE Nationals will observe official national dress

Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- For any educator, wearing any type of jeans, or any clothing that is tight-fitting, transparent, or unsuitable for the work environment

Standard 11 – Tolerance for Diversity:

Educators will foster an atmosphere of tolerance in schools and the workplace

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will exhibit tolerance and respect to individuals of different political or religious convictions
- Educators are expected to take all necessary steps to ensure that classrooms and other workplaces are free from all forms of harassment and discrimination.
- Educators will treat students and colleagues equitably, including those with disabilities or other special needs.

Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to

- Discriminating against or harassing colleagues, students or members of the public on the grounds of gender, marital status, pregnancy, age, race, ethnic, or national origin
- Engaging in conduct that represents extremism or cultural indoctrination

Standard 12 – Sensitive Issues:

Educators will not make remarks regarding sensitive issues that could cause anger or discomfort among students, colleagues, or the community

Professional Conduct, including but not limited to:

- Educators will ensure that classroom discussions are focused on the subject area being taught
- Educators will be respectful in all comments, and exercise special care if addressing issues – such as religion or politics – with the potential to cause controversy
- Educators will prevent students from raising potentially controversial issues for group discussion

Prohibited Unprofessional Conduct, including but not limited to

- Engaging in conversation with students about sensitive issues -- such as religion and politics – that does not serve a clear educational purpose tied to the ADEC curriculum