



Setting and Maintaining Ethical Boundaries

Competency

Educator sets and maintains ethical boundaries in their professional life.

Key Method

Educator develops a presentation that discusses the ethical spectrum and how it relates to situations that may affect education and/or educators.

Method Components

Professional Codes of Ethics

A movement is growing within the greater P-12 and educator preparation educational communities to ensure educators and prospective educators understand how professional decision-making can impact the safety and well-being of children, as well as the culture and mission of the school. Most professions have a strong set of principles to guide decision-making around these principles; in fact, all other professions have clear guidelines for professional ethics. The education profession, however, has not adopted a model code of conduct to assist educators with making ethical decisions and to assist educator preparation program providers (EPPs) in preparing their candidates to make ethical decisions. In the absence of a commonly accepted set of ethical standards, the education profession has often defaulted to judicial decisions and legislative action to govern the conduct of its members.



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Code of Ethics vs. Code of Conduct

A professional code of ethics sets a higher threshold than regulatory codes of conduct. A code of conduct provides absolutes for employment, licensure, and/or criminal sanctions. The Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE), however, helps mitigate the risks inherent within the profession and is designed as a guide for current and future educators to construct the best course of action when faced with ethical dilemmas, providing a basis for educator learning, self-reflection, and self-accountability.

The Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)

The Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) serves as a guide for future and current educators faced with the complexities of P–12 education. The establishment of this professional code of ethics by educators for educators honors the public’s trust and upholds the dignity of the profession.

The MCEE:

- Connects the aspirations of professional ethics with the day-to-day realities of the practicing educator
- Facilitates a broad understanding of what constitutes best ethical practice
- Helps ensure that educators are equipped with a framework for ethical decision-making
- Provides a basis for conversations across the profession about the importance of having a common language rooted in professional ethics.

The Model Code of Ethics for Educators consists of five major principles which broadly define critical dimensions of ethical practice expected of the professional educator.

1. Responsibility to the Profession
2. Responsibility for Professional Competence
3. Responsibility to Students
4. Responsibility to the School Community
5. Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology

For additional information about the Model Code of Ethics for Educators, the principles and performance indicators, please visit www.nasdtc.net.



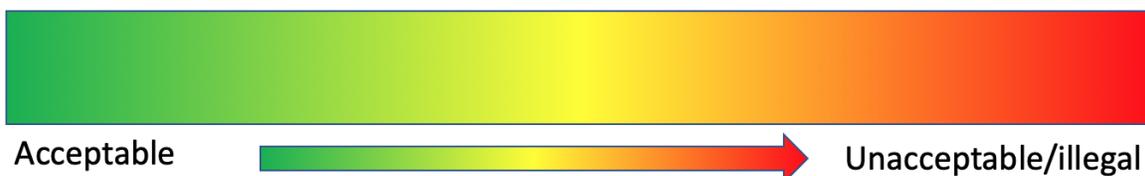
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The “Ethical Spectrum”

Ethical Spectrum



- Examples of “green area” behavior (clear-cut behaviors that are generally accepted)
- Examples of “red area” behavior (behaviors that are generally determined to be unacceptable and/or illegal)
- Examples of the “yellow area” between the green and the red (behaviors that are not clear cut and may depend on time and place)
- What it means by the statement, “Most educators operate in the yellow.”

Educators today are increasingly working in arenas that do not have clear-cut definitions of right and wrong.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Ashraf, H., Hosseinnia, M., & Domsy, J. G. H. (2017). EFL teachers' commitment to professional ethics and their emotional intelligence: A relationship study. *Cogent Education*, 4(1)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org.library.capella.edu/10.1080/2331186X.2017.1298188>

Bullough, R. (2011). Ethical and moral matters in teaching and teacher education. *Science Direct*. Retrieved from

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0742051X10001587?via%3Dihub>

Darden, E. (2014). Ethics at school: Let your conscience be your guide.

EdLaw-Phi Delta Kappan. February 2014. DOI: 10.1177/003172171409500516

Educational testing service: new program informs teachers' ethical decision making. (2016, May 04). *Education letter* retrieved from



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<https://news.ets.org/press-releases/new-program-informs-teachers-ethical-decision-making/>

Harrison, L. K. (2019). Educator misconduct in Idaho: A quantitative analysis (Order No. 13426867). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2175705732). Retrieved from: <https://www.proquest.com/openview/c1bee69a25f9d5a904182583c3f54f74/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>

Hellawell, B. (2015). Ethical accountability and routine moral stress in Special Educational Needs professionals. *Management in Education*, 29(3), 119–124. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020615584106>

Kafi, Z., Motallebzadeh, K., & Ashraf, H. (2018). Developing, localizing & validating code of professional ethics through PLS-SEM: EFL university instructors' perspectives. *Cogent Education*, 5(1). DOI:<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1492340?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

Kemman, H. R. (2019). Ethical school leadership: The conceptions and practices secondary principals use to maintain ethical context and relationships in their schools (Order No. 13810380). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2201789195). Retrieved from <https://scholarspace.library.gwu.edu/etd/mg74qm740>

Lynch, P., Heath, M., Morehead, S., & Wallace, L. A. (2015). An analysis of Missouri school districts' ethics policies as related to educator decision making at the district level (Order No. 3715755). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1701983712). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/openview/97910f05f6200ecec95791d25bde97d8/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>

Maxwell, Bruce & Tremblay-Laprise, Audrée-Anne & Fillion, Marianne & Boon, Helen & Daly, Caroline & Hoven, Mariette & Heilbronn, Ruth & Lenselink, Myrthe & Walters, Sue. (2016). A Five-Country Survey on Ethics Education in Preservice Teaching Programs. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 67. 135-151. 10.1177/0022487115624490. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294105993_A_Five-Country_Survey_on_Ethics_Education_in_Preservice_Teaching_Programs



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News Service. (April 24, 2014 Thursday). NATIONAL TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP MODEL CODE OF EDUCATOR ETHICS. States News Service. Retrieved from https://www.nasdtec.net/page/MCEE_Doc

Umpstead, R., Brady, K., Lugg, E., Klinker, J., & Thompson, D. (2013). Educator ethics: A comparison of teacher professional responsibility laws in four states. *Journal of Law and Education*, 42(2), 183.
<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/jle42&div=12&id=&p>

Resources

[Code of Ethics with Troy Hutchings and Phil Rogers \(Part 1 of 2\)](#)

[Code of Ethics with Troy Hutchings and Phil Rogers \(Part 2 of 2\)](#)

[The importance of ethics in education](#)

[Professional Ethics in the Classroom](#)

[The Model Code of Ethics for Educators](#)

[Rationale for the MCEE](#)

[National Council for the Advancement of Educator Ethics \(NCAEE\)](#)

[Focusing on Ethics: Smartphones in the classroom](#)

[Blurred Lines: Protecting educators from social media mishaps](#)

[Educator Ethics in the Classroom](#)

[ESP Professional Growth Continuum | NEA](#)

[Code of Ethics for Educators | NEA](#)

[Overview of the Model Code of Ethics for Educators \(MCEE\)](#)

[Code of ethics missing in Wisconsin schools](#)



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Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and be proficient for all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

300-500 words

Please answer the following contextual questions to help our reviewer understand your current situation. Do not include any information that will make you or others identifiable to our reviewers.

1. List your Career/Membership category, specific position and title, number of years working in education and a basic description of your worksite (grades, student population, demographics), community information (urban/rural/suburban), and other relevant information.
2. Describe your current knowledge of ethics in education. Have you had any training in educational ethics? How do you know if something is ethical? Be sure to fully explain your response with examples and details.

Passing: Responses completely answer each question and include specific examples that clearly illustrate understanding. Writing is easy to organize and understand.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following **three artifacts** as evidence of your learning. *Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Ethical Spectrum

Draw the “Ethical Spectrum”, then write at least 5 ethical situations that have meaning to you and place them in the correct spot on your drawing. Your spectrum should include:

- one situation in the green area
- one situation in the red area



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- three situations in the yellow area

**You can either draw this by hand and take a picture for submission or do it digitally using a tool of your choice.*

Artifact 2: Two-Column Chart

Create a two-column chart that includes five ethical situations where boundaries were crossed.

- In column 1, describe the situation.
- In column 2, list possible action(s) that could have been taken by the individual and/or others to avoid negative outcomes.

Three of your five situations may be the ones you identified on your Ethical Spectrum in the yellow area and how these “yellow situations” might move into the red.

Artifact 3: Share Your Learning

Choose **one** of the options below to share your learning with other educators.

- **Option 1: Slideshow**

(15-20 Sides)

Create a slideshow. Your presentation should include:

- A summary of the Educator Model Code of Ethics
- A definition of ethical boundaries
- Examples or scenarios of violations of ethical boundaries
- Why there is a need for educators to have a common framework of decision-making and conduct for setting and maintaining ethical boundaries
- An educator’s responsibility when he or she is aware that others are crossing boundaries
- Guidelines and/or advice for setting and maintaining ethical boundaries
- Risks to educators around violations of ethical boundaries
- Scenarios and opportunities for participants to role play and/or discuss real-life application of setting and maintaining ethical boundaries.

- **Option 2: News Article**

(500-800 words)

Write a news article to be featured in an education publication on how boundaries in education have come into being today. Your article should include:



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- The need to set and maintain ethical boundaries in education
- Examples of situations that violated ethical boundaries
- Current ongoing efforts to minimize risk to educators
- Advice to other educators for setting and maintaining ethical boundaries
- Educator’s responsibility when they are aware that others are crossing boundaries

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Ethical Spectrum	<p>Drawing is neat and easy to read</p> <p>And includes: -1 situation in the green area -1 situation in the red area -3 situations in the yellow area.</p>	<p>Drawing is hard to read</p> <p>And/or is missing one of the following: -1 situation in the green area -1 situation in the red area -3 situations in the yellow area.</p>	<p>Drawing is unreadable</p> <p>And/or is missing 2 or more of the following: -1 situation in the green area -1 situation in the red area -3 situations in the yellow area.</p>
Artifact 2: Two-Column Chart	<p>Includes 5 ethical situations where boundaries were crossed</p> <p>And all of the following: -column 1 describes the situation -column 2 lists possible action(s) that could have</p>	<p>Includes 3–4 ethical situations where boundaries were crossed</p> <p>And/or one or more of the following are missing: -column 1 describes the situation -column 2 lists possible action(s) that could have</p>	<p>Includes 1 or 2 ethical situations where boundaries were crossed</p> <p>And/or is missing all of the following: -column 1 describes the situation -column 2 lists possible action(s) that could have been taken to avoid negative outcomes.</p>



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	<p>been taken to avoid negative outcomes.</p> <p>And no more than three of your situations were from the ones you identified on your Ethical Spectrum in the yellow area.</p>	<p>been taken to avoid negative outcomes.</p> <p>And/or more than three of your situations were from the ones you identified on your Ethical Spectrum in the yellow area.</p>	<p>And more of your situations were from the ones you identified on your Ethical Spectrum in the yellow area.</p>
<p>Artifact 3 Option 1: Presentation</p>	<p>Includes all of the following requirements:</p> <p>15-20 slides</p> <p>A summary of the Educator Model Code of Ethics</p> <p>A definition of ethical boundaries</p> <p>Examples or scenarios of violations of ethical boundaries</p> <p>Why there is a need for educators to have a common framework of decision-making and conduct for</p>	<p>Includes most of the following requirements:</p> <p>15-20 slides</p> <p>A summary of the Educator Model Code of Ethics</p> <p>A definition of ethical boundaries</p> <p>Examples or scenarios of violations of ethical boundaries</p> <p>Why there is a need for educators to have a common framework of decision-making and conduct for</p>	<p>Includes only one or two of the following requirements:</p> <p>15-20 slides</p> <p>A summary of the Educator Model Code of Ethics</p> <p>A definition of ethical boundaries</p> <p>Examples or scenarios of violations of ethical boundaries</p> <p>Why there is a need for educators to have a common framework of decision-making and conduct for</p>



	<p>setting and maintaining ethical boundaries</p> <p>An educator's responsibility when he or she is aware that others are crossing boundaries.</p> <p>Guidelines and/or advice for setting and maintaining ethical boundaries</p> <p>Risks to educators around violations of ethical boundaries</p> <p>Scenarios and opportunities for participants to role play and/or discuss real-life application of setting and maintaining ethical boundaries.</p>	<p>An educator's responsibility when he or she is aware that others are crossing boundaries.</p> <p>Guidelines and/or advice for setting and maintaining ethical boundaries</p> <p>Risks to educators around violations of ethical boundaries</p> <p>Scenarios and opportunities for participants to role play and/or discuss real-life application of setting and maintaining ethical boundaries.</p>	<p>An educator's responsibility when he or she is aware that others are crossing boundaries.</p> <p>Guidelines and/or advice for setting and maintaining ethical boundaries</p> <p>Risks to educators around violations of ethical boundaries</p> <p>Scenarios and opportunities for participants to role play and/or discuss real-life application of setting and maintaining ethical boundaries.</p>
<p>Artifact 3 Option 2: News Article</p>	<p>Includes all of the following requirements:</p>	<p>Includes most of the following requirements:</p>	<p>Includes only one or two of the following requirements:</p>



	<p>The need to set and maintain ethical boundaries in education</p> <p>Examples of situations that violated ethical boundaries</p> <p>Current ongoing efforts to minimize risk to educators</p> <p>Advice to other educators for setting and maintaining ethical boundaries</p> <p>Educator's responsibility when they are aware that others are crossing boundaries.</p>	<p>The need to set and maintain ethical boundaries in education</p> <p>Examples of situations that violated ethical boundaries</p> <p>Current ongoing efforts to minimize risk to educators</p> <p>Advice to other educators for setting and maintaining ethical boundaries</p> <p>Educator's responsibility when they are aware that others are crossing boundaries.</p>	<p>The need to set and maintain ethical boundaries in education</p> <p>Examples of situations that violated ethical boundaries</p> <p>Current ongoing efforts to minimize risk to educators</p> <p>Advice to other educators for setting and maintaining ethical boundaries</p> <p>Educator's responsibility when they are aware that others are crossing boundaries.</p>
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Part 3 Reflection

(300–500 words)

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please answer the following reflective question. *Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*



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Within the realm of this micro-credential, based on your new understanding of level of risk, what do you plan to do differently when encountering risky situations, especially as you interact with students, parents, community, and/or colleagues?

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on both educator practice and student success. Specific examples are cited directly from personal and/or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.



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