

OAK PARK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

Series 4000

Personnel

AR 4119.21, 4219.21, 4319.21(a)

Code of Ethics

Preamble:

The Oak Park Unified School District accepts its responsibility for nurturing democratic principles, helping all students meet high standards, and providing an equal educational opportunity to all. District personnel are expected to adhere to the highest ethical standards and behavior in their relations with students, parents, community and colleagues. The well being of students should be the fundamental value in all decision-making and actions.

The Board of Education fully supports a Code of Ethics for the Oak Park Unified School District based on the twelve principles of Respect, Honesty, Trustworthiness, Loyalty, Courtesy, Self-Discipline, Integrity, Fairness, Responsibility, Cooperation, Citizenship, and Compassion.

The ethical standards, which should guide the actions of all staff members, are contained in a series of guiding principles. In certain cases, the principles are more appropriate to the actions of certificated staff members; in other cases to classified. All staff members, however, are expected to adhere to the Code of Ethics as it speaks to their conduct.

Guiding Principles:

A. Commitment to the Student

District personnel work to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals; serve as a model of ethical standards, continually reflecting on our actions as educators regarding ethical issues and how they apply to our district, school, classroom, curriculum and our profession; and strive through fair and just treatment to help each student achieve and succeed by fulfillment of the following obligations to student(s).

1. Encourage the student to seek independent action in the pursuit of learning.
2. Allow the student access to reasonable varying points of view.
3. Provide relevant subject matter, which will promote student progress.
4. Make every effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.

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5. Protect the student from embarrassment and disparagement. Do not permit personal comments, name calling, foul or insulting language or bullying on school grounds or at school events.

6. Maintain confidentiality regarding any student information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

7. Guard diligently against unfair treatment of any student on the basis of race, ethnicity, creed, gender, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, sexual orientation, or disability.

8. Use professional relationships with students only for student benefit and not in any way for private advantage.

B. Commitment to the Students' Parents and Families

District personnel know that it is essential for the school and home to interact frequently and effectively. Such personnel therefore form a partnership of responsibility with parents in order to acknowledge, respect, and appreciate each other so that the task of youth to understand and find a place in the adult world becomes a collaborative mutual goal. Curriculum, school practices and discussions must incorporate the knowledge of the students' families and the richness of their home culture by fulfillment of the following obligations to the parents and families:

1. Develop understanding and respect of community cultures in order to relate the students' school environment to their home environments.

2. Maintain regular communication with parents regarding student progress or problems, and respond in a timely manner to any special request from parents for information or communication.

3. Keep parents informed of all opportunities available to their children.

4. Ensure that all communication to parents is comprehensible, including translation into other languages when needed and feasible.

5. Offer alternative choices to students and parents in the event that materials being taught conflict with home values.

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6. Treat all students equitably and free from bias or a defensive, retaliatory manner in cases of negative parental involvement or conflict.
7. Develop open lines of communication and actively participate in discussions with parents to assure that their points of view, needs and desires are being heard, understood, and taken into consideration.
8. Evaluate how time demands from the school may impact on time demands at home.
9. Provide opportunities for parents to become involved in a meaningful way in the education of their children, and encourage parents to share their experiences and expertise at site and district levels.
10. Refrain from any relationship with parents, which are or may be perceived to be for personal advantage.

C. Commitment to the Profession

District personnel believe the quality of the services provided in the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens. Therefore, every effort is expected to be exerted to raise professional standards, improve service, promote a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged, and to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of trust to careers in education by fulfillment of the following obligations to the profession:

1. Act and speak at all times in a manner which exemplifies personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.
2. Accept academic degrees or professional certification only from duly accredited institutions.
3. Present professional qualifications accurately and completely.
4. Regard the employment agreement as a pledge to adhere to both the letter and the spirit of the contract and the law.
5. Give prompt notice to the employing agency of any change in availability of service.
6. Pursue appropriate measures to align laws, policies and regulations with sound educational goals.
7. Conduct professional business through proper channels.

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8. Use time granted for the purpose for which it is intended.
9. Maintain a commitment to professional development and keep abreast of current research in the field.
10. Strive to align actions with professional values and beliefs to enhance personal and organizational effectiveness.
11. Adhere to established professional standards.
12. Work and share collaboratively with colleagues and professional associations to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
13. Refrain from accepting or offering gifts or favors that might impair or appear to impair professional judgment or obtain special advantage.
14. Accurately represent official policies of the school district or educational institution when speaking or writing about policies.
15. Clearly distinguish private views from the official position of the institution.

D. Commitment to Certificated and Classified Colleagues

District personnel exemplify work relationships with colleagues that accord just and equitable treatment to all by fulfillment of the following obligations to colleagues:

1. Accord just and equitable treatment to all district personnel in the exercise of their professional rights and responsibilities.
2. Exercise vigilance in avoiding any special treatment in order to influence professional decisions of colleagues.
3. Maintain confidentiality regarding information obtained about colleagues in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
4. Protect fellow employees from intentional embarrassment or disparagement.
5. Act in a spirit of collaboration with fellow colleagues.

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6. Treat all staff equitably and free from bias and/or a defensive, retaliatory manner.
7. Develop open lines of communication and actively participate in discussions with colleagues to assure that their points of view, needs and desires are being heard, understood, and taken into consideration.
8. Present perspectives and opinions on work-related issues in ways that do not undermine the integrity and decisions of supervisors and colleagues.
9. Consider no personal success legitimate or ethical, which is secured by taking unfair advantage of another.
10. Refrain from making false or malicious statements about a colleague.
11. Maintain work relationships that are not in any way unfairly influenced by race, ethnicity, creed, gender, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social, or cultural background, sexual orientation, or disability.

E. Commitment to the Business Community

District personnel, in contacts with members of the business community, exemplify conduct, which demonstrates the highest level of professional conduct and an understanding of sound business practices by fulfillment of the following obligations to the business community:

1. Act in a manner, which demonstrates a personal commitment to the highest ethical standards.
2. Deal with each supplier, vendor, contractor, purveyor, or other business professional in a manner which demonstrates the District's commitment to excellence.
3. Act with and model exemplary personal integrity in all business relationships.
4. Place the needs of the schools and district facilities foremost in making recommendations and decisions about district business matters.
5. Represent the district always in a fair and positive light.
6. Operate fairly without any personal agenda in all matters involving the business relationships of the district.
7. Obey the law in its word, spirit, and intent at all times while performing duties.

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8. Exercise great care and good professional judgment in order to avoid situations that may compromise the reputation of the district.

9. Seek guidance, advice, and training from other professional associates inside and outside the district, regarding current school business practices.

Closing:

The Board of Education of the Oak Park Unified School District has adopted the foregoing Code of Ethics as a recommended measure of professional behavior for members of the Board and all staff. This Code of Ethics is intended to be a living document subject to periodic review and update. As defined in the preamble, District staff is expected to act in a manner, which demonstrates their personal commitment to the highest ethical standards.

Legal Reference: Code of Regulations, Title 5, 80331-80338,
Rules of Conduct for Professional Educators

Approved: 9-18-07