

Code of Ethical Conduct for Pupil Services Professionals

Professional practices are behaviors and attitudes that are based on a set of values that the members of the profession believe and accept. These values are evidenced by the professional's conduct toward students, colleagues, parents/guardians and other stakeholders. Professionals within the Pupil Services field are expected to abide by the following ethical guidelines:

(1) Pupil Services professionals shall abide by federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to the practice of education and by those local policies adopted by their educational entities' governing bodies. [These include but are not limited to IDEA, FERPA, State Board Regulations, and School Board Policies.] In no instance shall they deliberately avoid compliance with these laws or regulations or encourage others to do so.

(2) Pupil Services professionals shall be appropriately prepared and legally certified and/or licensed in their area of assignment. They may not be assigned to or willingly accept assignments they are not prepared, certified or licensed to fulfill, except on a temporary, short-term, emergency basis. Neither shall they employ or recommend for employment an individual who is not properly trained, certified or licensed.

(3) Pupil Services professionals shall maintain high levels of competence throughout their career, recognizing the rapidly changing nature of their field and the need for ongoing professional development.

(4) Pupil Services professionals shall exhibit consistent and equitable treatment of students, fellow educators, parents/guardians and other stakeholders. They shall respect the civil rights of all and not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or disabling condition. The foregoing list is not considered to be all-inclusive as to bases for discrimination.

(5) Pupil Services professionals shall accept the value of diversity in the practice of their profession. Diversity requires the professional to have a range of methodologies and resources available to meet the needs of all types of clients and to request the necessary materials, equipment and training to adequately address those needs.

(6) Pupil Services professionals shall impart to their clients those values such as responsibility, punctuality, honesty and respect for others that are recognized as promoting responsible citizenship.

(7) Pupil Services professionals shall exhibit acceptable and professional language and communication skills. Their verbal and written communications with parents, students and staff shall reflect sensitivity to fundamental human rights of dignity, privacy and respect.

(8) Pupil Services professionals shall be open-minded, knowledgeable and use appropriate judgment and communication skills when responding to an issue within the education environment.

(9) Pupil Services professionals shall keep in confidence information obtained in confidence in the course of professional service, unless required to be disclosed by law or by clear and compelling necessity based upon potential harm to the client or others.

(10) Pupil Services professionals shall exert reasonable effort to shield the client from conditions which interfere with learning or may be harmful to the client's health and safety. Similarly, they will exert reasonable effort to help the client remove and/or overcome identified barriers to learning. They will promote a positive climate within their institution.

(11) Pupil Services professionals shall not engage in improper personal or financial gain such as accepting gratuities, gifts or favors that might impair or appear to impair their professional judgment. Nor shall they exploit a professional relationship for the purpose of professional gain or advantage.

(12) Pupil Services professionals shall maintain high standards of conduct in their relationships with the students for whom they are responsible. They shall not knowingly or intentionally distort or misrepresent evaluations of students, sexually harass or engage in sexual relationships with students, or knowingly and intentionally withhold evidence from authorities about violations of the legal obligations defined in law by others.

(13) Pupil Services professionals shall not knowingly or intentionally interfere with a colleague in the exercise of his/her professional duties and responsibilities. Nor shall they (a) sexually harass a colleague, (b) coerce or promise special treatment to influence the professional decision of a colleague, or (c) threaten or coerce a fellow employee who in good faith discloses to an authority an actual or suspected violation of law.

(14) Pupil Services professionals shall strive to offer a complete program of services, making their services available to all students on an equitable basis.

(15) Pupil Services professionals shall recognize a child's right to obtain services, regardless of the wishes of any other individual, including parents/guardians.

(16) Pupil Services professionals shall recognize the interest of parents/guardians in the academic, career and socio-emotional development of their children and will involve and inform those parents/guardians within the bounds of confidentiality.

(17) Pupil Services professionals shall avoid dual relationships with their clients and, if such relationships become evident, shall recuse themselves from providing professional services, referring the client to another competent professional.

(18) Pupil Services professionals will recognize when a situation is beyond their level of competence or outside their comfort zone and will arrange for the client to receive services from another professional better qualified to provide them.

(19) Pupil Services professionals shall practice metacognitive skills to determine whether their services are meeting the needs of their clients. This includes asking oneself clear questions about the direction their services may be taking and the results obtained, and answering oneself honestly.

(20) Pupil Services professionals shall maintain their professionalism through involvement with appropriate professional organizations at the local, state and national levels.

(21) Pupil Services professionals shall assume good intentions on the part of clients and their families until proven otherwise.

(22) Pupil Services professionals shall maintain educational records that are accurate, clear and lacking in speculation or personal opinion.

(23) Pupil Services professionals shall practice ethical behavior outside of the school setting as well as within.

(24) Pupil Services professionals shall establish a regular cycle of program review to promote ongoing program improvement.

(25) Pupil Services professionals shall follow through on any promised action in a timely manner.

Violations of the aforementioned ethical statements may result in an individual being terminated from membership in the Pennsylvania Association of Pupil Services Administrators.