

# Hamilton County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually in February	Descriptor Term: <b>Code of Professional Conduct</b>	Descriptor Code: 5.6011	Issued Date: 09/16/21
		Rescinded:	Revised:

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2 The Hamilton County Board of Education acknowledges that all educators, including certified  
3 teachers, classified educational assistants, and any other employees who instructs or care for children,  
4 carry a public trust. This trust is vital since the community depends upon the school system to mold  
5 and shape its most precious asset, our children  
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7 In order to maintain this trust, educators must be held to the highest professional standards not only  
8 while at school or working with students but also in their personal lives. Accordingly, the Hamilton  
9 County Board of Education affirms the broad principles of professionalism set forth in the Tennessee  
10 Teachers' Code of Ethics and adopts these principles as standards of conduct for all educators, whether  
11 certified professionals, classified assistants, and any other employees who provide instruction to or  
12 care for students.  
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14 Without limiting the full scope of the Tennessee Teachers' Code of Ethics, the Board underscores  
15 certain specific expectations for its instructional employees.  
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- 17 • Employees must conduct themselves in a manner that preserves the dignity and integrity of the  
18 education process.<sup>1</sup> They should exercise great care in how they present themselves in the  
19 classroom, in the public, and on social media since missteps, however unintentional, impact the  
20 public's confidence in an educator's sound judgment.
- 21 • Employees must maintain a professional approach with students at all times and avoid any setting  
22 that a reasonable person would think is inappropriate or lacks transparency.<sup>2</sup>
- 23 • Employees must protect the health and safety of students.<sup>3</sup> This duty also extends to protecting  
24 their emotional well-being.<sup>4</sup> This duty necessarily requires educators to place themselves in places  
25 of trust vis à vis the student. This is a heavy responsibility.
- 26 • Employees must avoid any interaction with any student that has any sort of sexual overtones.<sup>5</sup> This  
27 prohibition applies not only to the obviously inappropriate actions or relationships that could lead  
28 to criminal prosecution but also to the seemingly innocuous banter that some might minimize as  
29 joking or teasing. Because of the level of trust that must exist between an employee and a student,  
30 students may not be in a position to understand when a line has been crossed, and if they are, they  
31 are not in a position to express their concerns. Accordingly, the public demands that employees  
32 adhere to the highest ethical standard in this regard, and the Board of Education will not tolerate  
33 deviation from that standard.
- 34 • Employees must not unfairly favor, exclude, or deny any student on the basis of race; color; creed;  
35 disability; sex; national origin; marital status; political or religious beliefs, family; social or cultural  
36 background; or sexual orientation.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, since each of these issues can be important to  
37 students and their families, employees must take great care when exercising their own freedom of  
38 expression to be alert to how their views may impact a student's or parent's perception of the  
39 educator so as not to create unnecessary barriers to the education process.

- 1 • Employees must behave with appropriate sobriety and discretion.<sup>7</sup> Use of illegal drugs or misuse of
- 2 legal drugs and alcohol can be devastating to anyone, and, in the case of an educator, such actions
- 3 can erode the public trust by undermining confidence in the employee’s sound judgment.
- 4 • Employees must protect confidential information of students and shall not disclose such
- 5 confidential information to anyone, including other school system employees, unless there is an
- 6 appropriate reason for disclosing it.<sup>8</sup>

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8 The director of schools shall have the Administration develop an appropriate training program for  
9 instructional employees to ensure understanding of this Code of Professional Conduct.

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39 Legal References:

- 40 1. <sup>1</sup> Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1004(c)(2).
- 41 2. <sup>1</sup> Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1003(b)(14) and (19).
- 42 3. <sup>1</sup> Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1003(b)(7).
- 43 4. <sup>1</sup> Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1003(b)(8).
- 44 5. <sup>1</sup> Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1003(b)(15).
- 45 6. <sup>1</sup> Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1003(b)(10).
- 46 7. <sup>1</sup> Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1003(b)(16), (17), (18), (19); § 49-5-1004(b)(9).
- 47 8. <sup>1</sup> Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1003(b)(12).

Cross References: