



# Educator Responsibility to the School Community

## Competency

The educator leverages research and resources to foster ethical relationships and cultivate effective, inclusive interactions with all members of the school community.

## Key Method

The educator uses the “Learn-Design-Do-Reflect” cycle to explore, design, and implement strategies that foster ethical and positive relationships within the school community, including engaging with parents/guardians, colleagues, community stakeholders, and employers to promote equity, inclusion, and support the best interests of students and the school community.

## Method Components

Professional Codes of Ethics

In PK–12 education, a growing movement seeks to ensure that educators and aspiring educators understand the critical impact of their professional decisions on the safety, well-being, and success of students, as well as the overall culture and mission of their schools. While most professions adhere to robust ethical guidelines, the education field has yet to universally adopt a model code of conduct. Instead, the profession often relies on judicial rulings and legislative mandates to define ethical standards. This gap highlights the urgent need for a cohesive framework to guide ethical decision-making, particularly for educator preparation programs (EPPs) tasked with equipping candidates for the complexities of the classroom.

### Code of Ethics vs. Code of Conduct

A professional code of ethics operates on a higher plane than regulatory codes of conduct. Codes of conduct set boundaries for compliance with employment terms, licensure requirements, or legal mandates. In contrast, the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) serves as a proactive framework for mitigating the inherent risks in the profession. It empowers educators to navigate ethical dilemmas thoughtfully, fostering a culture of reflection, accountability, and professionalism.

### The Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)

The MCEE stands as a professional touchstone, developed by educators for educators, to address the complexities of PK–12 education while honoring public trust and upholding the dignity of the teaching profession. Its principles help bridge the aspirations of professional ethics with the day-to-day realities of educators, promoting a shared understanding of best practices and ethical responsibilities.

The MCEE:

- Connects professional aspirations with practical realities.
- Promotes broad understanding of ethical best practices.
- Provides a decision-making framework for ethical challenges.
- Establishes a shared professional language rooted in ethics.

The code's five guiding principles define critical dimensions of ethical practice expected of all educators:

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 more information about the MCEE, its principles, and performance indicators, visit [NASDTEC](#).

## Ethical Responsibilities Within the School Community

The following principles expand on the MCEE's tenets, offering actionable insights into fostering ethical relationships across the school community.

### **Relationships with Parents/Guardians**

- Communicate promptly, respectfully, and in the best interest of students.
- Acknowledge the history, needs, and cultural backgrounds of students and their families.
- Uphold equity and inclusion by accommodating diverse perspectives.
- Maintain confidentiality, disclosing information only when legally required.

### **Relationships with Colleagues**

- Treat colleagues as respected professionals and approach differences with civility.
- Seek to understand the historical and cultural experiences of underrepresented colleagues.
- Resolve conflicts privately and respectfully, adhering to district policies.
- Collaborate to support academic and organizational goals that serve student interests.
- Advocate for a harassment-free workplace.

### **Relationships with the Community and Stakeholders**

- Support policies and laws that enhance the education and well-being of students and families.
- Collaborate with community organizations and individuals to promote student success without personal gain.
- Communicate transparently with families and community members about the use of AI tools in classrooms when applicable, including how student data is protected and how tools are intended to support learning.

### **Relationships with Employers**

- Follow policies and laws when using school property, resources, and materials.
- Respect intellectual property rights when sharing educational materials.
- Exhibit personal and professional conduct that aligns with the best interests of the organization and its stakeholders.

## Navigating Intersecting or Multiple Relationships

Educators must be vigilant about the risks posed by intersecting or multiple relationships (e.g., student/babysitter, parent/friend). These relationships can compromise objectivity, create conflicts of interest, or negatively impact student well-being and learning. Before entering or continuing such relationships, educators should:

- Assess the potential impact on professional objectivity and effectiveness.
- Weigh the risks and benefits of relationships with individuals with whom they have a past or personal connection.

## Conclusion

The principles outlined in the Model Code of Ethics for Educators serve as a vital guide for navigating the challenges of modern education. By fostering ethical practices, educators can safeguard the trust of their communities, uphold the dignity of the profession, and advance the success of every student. A commitment to these standards ensures that educators not only adhere to regulatory expectations but also embody the aspirational values that define excellence in education.

## Supporting Rationale and Research

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## Resources

Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)

### **Educator Ethics Stack**

Last Revised on Feb 10, 2026

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

[Rationale for the MCEE](#)

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

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

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

Ethics in Education

[Beyond the Classroom: The Importance of Ethics in Education](#)

[Code of Ethics Missing in Wisconsin Schools](#)

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

[ESP Professional Growth Continuum | NEA](#)

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

[Blurred Lines: Protecting Educators From Social Media Mishaps](#)

Instructional Tools and Strategies

[Concept Circles and Chart](#)

## 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 reviewers understand your current situation. *Please do not include any information that will make you or others identifiable to our reviewers.*

### **Educator Ethics Stack**

Last Revised on Feb 10, 2026

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 understanding of ethical responsibilities within the school community. Have you participated in any training or professional development related to fostering ethical relationships with parents/guardians, colleagues, community stakeholders, or employers? How do you evaluate whether interactions and decisions align with ethical principles? Provide examples that demonstrate your approach to maintaining equity, inclusion, and professionalism in your school community.

**Passing:** Responses fully address each question, demonstrating a clear understanding of ethical responsibilities within the school community. Specific examples are provided to illustrate the thoughtful application of ethical principles. Writing is well-organized and easy to follow.

### Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit **the following two 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: Concept Circles and Chart**

Reflect on your ethical responsibilities to various groups in the school community: families/guardians, colleagues, the community, and employers. Use the linked Concept Circles and Chart (see the Resources section) to guide your reflections:

#### **Concept Circles:**

- Use the left half of the concept circle to reflect on your ideal relationship with your school community and identify the steps needed to achieve it.
- Use the right half of the concept circle to reflect on your ideal relationship with your employer and identify the steps needed to achieve it.

#### **3-Column Chart:**

- Use the chart to summarize what you have learned about your ethical responsibilities to students, parents, and colleagues.
- Include specific strategies you will apply to minimize risks and foster positive, ethical relationships.

In submitting this artifact, you may choose the method that works best for you. However you choose, you must submit one file only in PDF, PNG, Google Slides, or Word format.

Possible approaches:

- Download the charts and type directly on them using your preferred digital tool.
- Download the charts, handwrite your answers, and scan the pages into a PDF.
- Download the charts, handwrite your answers, take photos, and place those photos into a Google Doc or Word Doc - then save as a PDF.
- Recreate the charts digitally and add your text.
- Hand-draw your version of the charts and submit a clear, legible scan or photo.

**Please ensure your final submission is clear and easy to read.**

### **Artifact 2: Parent Communication Plan**

200–500 words

Develop a communication plan to foster ongoing, ethical communication with parents and guardians about activities and projects involving their children. Your plan should reflect the principles of the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) and include the following elements:

#### **Big Ideas/Topics:**

- Identify the key themes or topics you plan to communicate regularly to parents.
- Explain why these topics are important to share.

#### **Timeline:**

- Specify when and how often you will communicate with parents (e.g., weekly, monthly).
- Include a clear start and end timeline, or a calendar outline if applicable.

**Communication Methods:**

- Detail how you will deliver your messages (e.g., newsletters, email blasts, messaging apps, blogs, or other platforms).

This plan should demonstrate your understanding of ethical communication practices and align with your responsibilities to the school community.

Part 2. Rubric

	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Artifact 1:</b> Concept Circles and Chart	<p>The Concept Circle Map is fully completed and clearly distinguishes between positive and negative actions.</p> <p>Entries demonstrate an understanding of how to build constructive relationships with both community stakeholders and employers, as well as recognition of actions that could damage those relationships.</p> <p>The three-column chart is complete with specific, MCEE-aligned strategies for Students, Parents/Caregivers, and Colleagues.</p> <p>Entries clearly reflect professional boundaries, ethical responsibilities, and effective practices for</p>	<p>The Concept Circle Map is mostly complete and includes some distinction between positive and negative actions.</p> <p>Entries show a general understanding of relationships with community/stakeholders and employers but may be uneven or lack clarity.</p> <p>The three-column chart is mostly complete and includes strategies for each group, though some may be limited in detail or only loosely connected to the MCEE.</p> <p>Entries show a general understanding of minimizing professional and ethical risks.</p>	<p>The Concept Circle Map is incomplete or contains limited entries. Positive and negative actions are missing, unclear, or do not address both community/stakeholders and employers.</p> <p>The three-column chart is incomplete or contains vague, general statements. Strategies are not clearly aligned with the MCEE and do not address all three groups (Students, Parents/Caregivers, Colleagues).</p> <p>The chart is unreadable or lacks sufficient detail to understand.</p>

	<p>minimizing risks in each category.</p> <p>The chart is easy to read and understand.</p>		
<p><b>Artifact 2:</b> Parent Communication Plan</p>	<p>All of the following are included in the plan:</p> <p>Big ideas/topics to communicate.</p> <p>Why these topics are important to communicate.</p> <p>When communication will occur (frequency, start/end dates, calendar).</p> <p>How communication will occur (e.g., newsletter, email blast, messaging, website/blog).</p>	<p>Some of the following are included in the plan:</p> <p>Big ideas/topics to communicate.</p> <p>Why these topics are important to communicate.</p> <p>When communication will occur (frequency, start/end dates, calendar).</p> <p>How communication will occur (e.g., newsletter, email blast, messaging, website/blog).</p>	<p>Two or less of the following are included in the plan:</p> <p>Big ideas/topics to communicate.</p> <p>Why these topics are important to communicate.</p> <p>When communication will occur (frequency, start/end dates, calendar).</p> <p>How communication will occur (e.g., newsletter, email blast, messaging, website/blog).</p>

### 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.

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

Within the scope of this micro-credential, based on your new understanding of the level of risk, what will you do differently when encountering questionable or unacceptable situations, especially as you interact with students, families, and the school community? How will your new understanding of the topic help you promote equity and improve your cultural competency?

**Your response should include specific examples from your personal or professional experiences that illustrate how this micro-credential has shifted your perspective or approach to ethical challenges.** Reflect on how this new understanding will shape your decision-making in interactions with students, families, colleagues, and the broader school community.

Provide actionable steps to demonstrate how you will integrate your new learning into future practices, particularly in fostering equitable and inclusive relationships. Address how your commitment to the Model Code of Ethics for Educators will guide your efforts to create a supportive and culturally competent school environment.

Passing:

- Reflection demonstrates a clear understanding of how this activity has positively impacted students, families, and the school community.
- Specific examples are cited directly from personal and/or professional experiences to support claims, illustrating a thoughtful application of new learning.
- The reflection includes specific, actionable steps for integrating new knowledge into future practices, with a focus on fostering ethical, equitable, and inclusive relationships.
- Addresses how the new understanding of the topic promotes equity, improves cultural competency, and enhances decision-making within the school community.