



Educator Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology

Competency

Educator demonstrates responsible and ethical use of technology by identifying and addressing risks, fostering equitable practices, and adhering to professional standards.

Key Method

Educator evaluates personal and professional technology use to identify and address risks, establishes norms for responsible daily use of current technologies, and examines the extent of First Amendment protections for educators.

Method Components

Professional Codes of Ethics

The growing emphasis on educator ethics within PK–12 and educator preparation communities highlights the importance of ethical decision-making in safeguarding children, upholding school culture, and advancing the mission of education. While most professions have robust ethical guidelines, the education profession has historically lacked a universally adopted model code of ethics. In this absence, educators often rely on judicial rulings and legislative actions to navigate ethical challenges. The **Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)** addresses this gap by guiding ethical decision-making and preparing educators to uphold professional standards in an increasingly digital world.

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Code of Ethics vs. Code of Conduct

A professional code of ethics establishes higher standards than regulatory codes of conduct, which focus on compliance for employment, licensure, or legal requirements. The MCEE equips educators to mitigate risks and make informed decisions in complex situations, including those involving technology. The MCEE fosters self-reflection, learning, and accountability, enabling educators to integrate ethical practices into their use of digital tools and platforms.

The Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)

The Model Code of Ethics for Educators consists of five major principles that 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

The MCEE provides a foundation for ethical practices, especially in navigating the challenges posed by technology in PK–12 education. By bridging professional aspirations with practical realities, the MCEE helps educators:

- Understand ethical technology use in daily practice;
- Make informed decisions to safeguard students and maintain trust;
- Engage in professional conversations about ethical responsibilities in the digital age.

The MCEE's **Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology** principle specifically addresses the educator's role in leveraging technology responsibly while protecting the dignity of the profession and ensuring student safety.

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

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Common Ethical Dilemmas

Educators face unique risks in their personal and professional use of technology. To address these challenges, educators should:

- Define and reflect on their digital footprint;
- Identify and secure their personal and professional social media accounts;
- Research and comply with policies on student privacy rights;
- Evaluate the ethical implications of texting stakeholders or students;
- Critique their personal and professional use of social media to minimize risks.

Personal and Professional Technology Norms

Developing and adhering to technology norms ensures responsible and ethical practices. Educators can:

- Examine and follow district policies related to ethical technology use;
- Advocate for or create a classroom **appropriate use policy (AUP)** if one is not in place;
- Review case studies and legal precedents related to technology use;
- Respect students' privacy on social media unless explicit consent is given, while remaining mindful of the educator's obligations as a mandatory reporter to address potential concerns related to student safety;
- Address issues like cyberbullying and its impact on the learning environment;
- Maintain separate personal and professional profiles to avoid conflicts;
- Evaluate AI-powered tools (e.g., content generators, predictive analytics, or grading assistants) for bias, transparency, and student data privacy before classroom use.

First Amendment Protection

The First Amendment influences educators' use of technology by defining the boundaries between personal free speech and professional responsibility in online spaces. When teachers post on social media, participate in online forums, or communicate electronically, their expressions may be viewed through both a constitutional and ethical lens. Understanding this framework helps educators avoid actions that could

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undermine trust, breach confidentiality, or be interpreted as representing the school. Educators should analyze:

- The application of First Amendment protections to technology use;
- Case studies involving educators' rights and responsibilities under the First Amendment;
- The balance between freedom of speech and professional ethics in digital interactions.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Understanding FOIA and FERPA is critical for educators navigating the sharing and storage of electronic records. Educators should explore:

- The definitions and applications of FOIA and FERPA in education;
- How these laws affect the sharing of sensitive information electronically;
- Recognizing that certain digital communications are public records under FOIA and state laws;
- Critiquing FERPA regulations as they apply to sharing electronic student records responsibly.

Supporting Rationale and Research

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:

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Du Boulay, B., Mitrovic, A., Yacef, K., Porayska-Pomsta, K., Holmes, W., & Nemorin, S. (n.d.). The Ethics of AI in Education Handbook of Artificial Intelligence in Education. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2406.11842>

Levy, R., Asman, O., & Barnoy, S. (2024). Boundary-blurred behaviors in academic teachers-students Facebook interaction: are guidelines needed? A cross-sectional study. BMC Nursing, 23(1).

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Güney, Z. (2019). Professional ethics in performance and educational technology. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 14(4), 190–200. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NB33UGvMtjaxywqaUUGOnuZauTh7PUsw/view?usp=drive_link

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>

Usher, M., & Barak, M. (2024). Unpacking the role of AI ethics online education for science and engineering students. *International Journal of STEM Education*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-024-00493-4>

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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Resources

Ethics

Videos

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

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

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

Articles

[Beyond the Classroom: The importance of ethics in education](#)

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

[Rationale for the MCEE](#)

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

[ESP Professional Growth Continuum | NEA](#)

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

Podcasts

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

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

Personal and Professional Technology Norms

[ISTE Standards for Educators](#)

First Amendment Protection

[The First Amendment in Schools](#)

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[Rights of Teachers | The First Amendment Encyclopedia](#)

[Public School Teachers' First Amendment Rights: In Danger in the Wake of "Bong Hits 4 Jesus"](#)

FOIA and FERPA

[Privacy - Office of Educational Technology](#)

[Privately Owned Electronic Devices](#)

[Protecting Student Privacy](#)

[Student Privacy, Technology, and the FERPA Framework](#)

[Fixing FERPA - Strengthening Student Privacy Protections for the Digital Age](#)

[Freedom of Information Act: Learn](#)

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 job title, specific position, number of years working in education, a basic description of your worksite (grades, student

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population), community information (urban/rural/suburban), and other relevant information.

2. Describe your current understanding of the ethical use of technology in educational settings. Reflect on your use of technology both professionally and personally. How do you evaluate the risks associated with technology use in education? Provide specific examples of how you currently navigate these challenges and explain any practices you have developed to address them.

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

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

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

Artifact 1: Educator Handbook

(10-15 pages)

Include all of the following:

Cover Page

- Include title and participant details (no identifying information).

Table of Contents

Norms (2-3 pages)

- Personal and professional norms for daily and weekly technology use.

Policies (3-4 pages)

- Summarize First Amendment rights, FERPA, and FOIA as they relate to educators' use of technology.
- Create a single handout covering essential Do's and Don'ts for each.

Social Media and Privacy (3-4 pages)

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- Summarize common ethical dilemmas in social media use - highlighting one platform.
- Include Do's, Don'ts, and privacy tips for minimizing risks.
- Outline district expectations and policies related to privacy rights.

Mandatory Reporting and Acceptable Use Policy (2–4 pages)

- Create one handout addressing key points on mandatory reporting and the district's acceptable use policy for educators and students.

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Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Educator Handbook	<p>Each section of the handbook meets the specified page range and fully addresses the required topics.</p> <p>Topics are explained in a clear and concise manner with appropriate depth.</p> <p>All handouts demonstrate a clear connection to the MCEE and ethical practices.</p> <p>All handouts are user-friendly and practical for educators.</p> <p>Examples used are directly relevant to the topics and provide meaningful insights.</p> <p>The handbook is well-organized, includes a cover page, and features a complete table of contents.</p>	<p>Most sections of the handbook meet the specified page range and address the required topics.</p> <p>Topics are explained, but may lack clarity or depth in some areas.</p> <p>Some handouts demonstrate a connection to the MCEE and ethical practices.</p> <p>Some handouts are user-friendly and practical for educators.</p> <p>Examples used are somewhat relevant to the topics but may lack meaningful insights.</p> <p>The handbook is organized but may be missing a cover page or a complete table of contents.</p>	<p>Less than half the sections of the handbook meet the specified page range or address the required topics.</p> <p>Topics are not explained in a clear or concise manner and lack appropriate depth.</p> <p>Handouts do not demonstrate a connection to the MCEE or ethical practices.</p> <p>Handouts are not user-friendly or practical for educators.</p> <p>Examples used are irrelevant or fail to provide meaningful insights.</p> <p>The handbook is poorly organized, missing a cover page, and lacks a table of contents.</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.

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

1. Within the realm of this micro-credential, based on your new understanding of ethical and responsible technology use, what specific actions or changes will you implement to address risky situations? How will these changes impact your interactions with students, parents, the community, and colleagues, particularly in relation to technology use, social media, and privacy considerations? Provide specific examples or strategies you plan to adopt to navigate these challenges effectively.

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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