

Professional Conduct Policy

MSU Teacher Preparation Program Team 3 Approved by the Teacher Preparation APPC, 1/11/96

In this time of transition from being a student to being a professional teacher, it is important that you begin to see yourself as a lifelong learner rather than a student fulfilling university requirements. Both your school-based experiences and your university coursework are vital and integral components of your professional preparation. Because the way you conduct yourself in these settings reflects on you as a professional, we want to be clear about your responsibilities with regard to professional and ethical conduct. Failure to comply with these (and other university policies governing student conduct) will result in a review of your progress by your team and specific recommendations regarding your continued participation in the teacher certification program.

Attendance and Punctuality

You are expected to be present and on time for your professional commitments. If you must be absent from any one of your professional responsibilities due to illness or an emergency, you must inform the people who are affected by your absence. That is, for your field placement you must notify your mentor teacher, your field partner(s) if you have one, and your MSU liaison or field instructor. For your on-campus courses, you must notify your course instructor. More than two absences during a semester from on-campus courses or pre-internship field placements is cause for concern. Recurring absences or tardiness will put your recommendation for continuation in the program in jeopardy. During the internship, interns who are absent more than four days in a semester in their school placement may be required to make up the time.

If you have difficulty meeting this expectation because of an emergency or any other reason, talk to your course instructor or Team coordinator in advance or as soon as possible. Informing the appropriate people about extenuating circumstances will allow us to work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

Confidentiality

Classroom Discussions:

Your field experiences are an important part of your learning and you will be discussing them in your courses. Just as teachers are expected to respect the privacy and dignity of the children and families with whom they work, so we expect you to use discretion. In casual conversations or social situations, do not relate stories from classrooms or schools that may be embarrassing to teachers or students or that include sensitive information about a child or family. When discussing classroom situations in class, do so carefully. Use a fictitious name for the student involved if you need to include family or individual information in your explanation or if the situation is particularly difficult. Mask the name of a student on any written or visual work shared in class or used in an assignment. When discussing teaching practice you have observed in the field, be mindful of maintaining a tone of professional courtesy.

Interviews:

Use pseudonyms and screen/mask identifying information when reporting interviews with children/youth/adults. If an assignment requires you to interview an adult, you should clearly state or give to the interviewee, in writing, the purpose of the interview and the uses you will make of the material. Ask your instructor for an example if you are unsure how to word this statement.

Photographs/Videotapes/Audiotapes:

Always ask permission of the classroom teacher to make students' photographs/videotapes/ audiotapes or to use them in displays/portfolios. Occasionally there are circumstances which require that a student's whereabouts be kept secret and photographs are not allowed. Some schools and districts require written permission from parents/guardians for taking any photographs, videotapes or audiotapes. Be sure to check with the classroom teacher on what is needed.

Portfolios:

If you use students' work or interview material in your portfolio, use pseudonyms and screen/mask names and personal identifying information.

District Requirements:

Ask your classroom teacher if there are any other district or school requirements regarding confidentiality that you should be aware of.

Dress and Deportment in Schools

When you are in school, you are expected to dress appropriately. You will be viewed and judged as another adult by students, parents, teachers and other people in the building. Be polite and considerate of other adults in the building including the principal, custodians, secretary, paraprofessionals, etc.

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

The University Drug and Alcohol Policy will be enforced which prohibits the possession or use of illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages in classes and field placements. Students are expected to be free of the influence of such substances in classes and field placements.

Professional Communication

Professional education can be an intensely personal and challenging process. In your classes and field placements, you are expected to give and accept constructive feedback appropriately and to react appropriately in stressful situations. You are also expected to take an active role in your learning and contribute to the learning of your fellow students.

If you have concerns, problems, or questions about any aspect of your coursework or fieldwork, you should first address them to the instructor or team person who is most directly involved. This applies to situations at the university as well as in the field. If the situation is not resolved at that level, you should request assistance from the Team coordinator or faculty leader.