

# Ethical and Proper Behavior for Paraeducators in the Schools

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# Objectives

- Understand and follow your school's written policies
- Know regulations on alcohol and drugs
- Avoid misrepresentation or falsification of the information
- Become acquainted with the expectation for use of public funds or property
- Understand “branch of contract”
- Avoid improper relationships with students

# Understand and Follow District's Written Policies

- Look carefully into your job description so that you know what is expected of you.
- Request a copy of school or district's policies and procedures and take time to read through them carefully.
- Discuss questions and concerns with your supervisor.



# Exercise & Explore

What is your school policy regarding ethics and serving as a role model to students?

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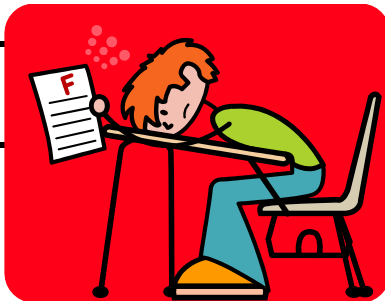
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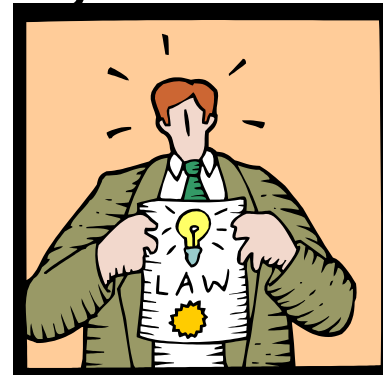
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# Know Regulations on Alcohol and Drugs

- Do not undermine school policies on alcohol and drugs even if you don't agree with them.
- Refrain from using alcohol and drugs during the course of employment.
- Know your “Safe Zone” policy.



# Exercise & Explore

Summarize your school policy with regard to alcohol and drugs on the school premises.

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# Avoid Misrepresentation or Falsification of Information

- Issues may require you to communicate accurate and complete information to administrators, teachers, parents, or students:
  - Information about your qualifications
  - Information included on compliance reports
  - Information relating to evaluation of students
  - Reasons given for absences or leaves
  - Information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation

# Unethical conduct with regard to information

- Falsifying or deliberately misrepresenting information—that is, providing inaccurate information or changing information that has been provided by someone else.
- Omitting information—that is, not providing information that you are asked for.



# Exercise & Explore

Laura, a paraprofessional with many years' experience, was concerned to hear that the district would be requiring all paraprofessionals without college credits to attend training sessions. These sessions were held after school or on weekends. When she discussed the training with a group of paraprofessionals in the school, she was surprised to hear Mary, a much younger paraprofessional, say, "I won't attend the training because I have a college degree."

Mary had attended high school with Laura's daughter, and Laura knew that Mary had registered for several college classes but had never completed them.

**Question: Is Mary's statement to officials a misrepresentation of information?**

# Exercise & Explore

Ted works as a paraprofessional in a unit for students with behavior disorders. He overslept one morning and knew that he would be very late getting to school. He was just leaving the house, and wondering what excuse he could make for his lateness, when the phone rang. It was his brother saying that their father was in the hospital. It wasn't serious, but the hospital would keep the father overnight for monitoring.

As Ted entered the school building—late—he bumped into the principal, who say, “Ted, we’ve been wondering where you were. Anything wrong?” “Well,” replied Ted, “my father’s been take into hospital...”

**Question: Why would Ted reply be considered misrepresentation of information?**

# Avoid Misuse of Public Funds or Property

- The principles of ethical conduct that relates to public funds and property and your responsibilities as a paraprofessional include:
  - Using funds and property only for the purpose for which they were requested or received.
  - Keeping careful and accurate records of money received and spent, or property received and used.
  - Requesting honest reimbursement for expenses incurred on behalf of the school or for services rendered.



# Improper Remunerative Conduct

- Soliciting students or their parents to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from you as part of your private business, or in exchange for your using your influence on their behalf in some way
- Promoting summer camps, athletic camps, or any other out-of-school activity that you are involved with, without the written approval of your administration
- Tutoring students from your school for remuneration, unless approved by the school principal, local board of education, or superintendent
- Accepting gifts for personal use from vendors or potential vendors in return for your promoting their merchandise or services with your teacher or students



# Exercise & Explore

In one school district the school psychologist frequently met with parents to explain their children's test results.

In the course of the meeting, often in the home of the parents, the psychologist would mention that he sold a particular cleaning product. Often parents would buy the product from him.

**Question: Would you consider this a problem?  
If so, why? If not, why not?**

# Avoid Breach of Contract

- Ethical conduct
  - Honoring the whole of the contract
  - Honoring it all of the time that it is in effect
- Unethical conduct
  - Abandoning contract without prior release or agreement from your employer
  - Willfully refusing to perform services required by the contract
- Read the contract before signing it
- Renew the contract to match the changing expectation



# Avoid Improper Relationships with Students

- Unethical conducts include”
  - Committing any act of child abuse, physical and emotional
  - Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act that endangers a student
  - Committing or soliciting any sexual act
  - Committing any act of sexual harassment
  - Soliciting, encouraging, or conducting a romantic or otherwise inappropriate relationship with a student (do not date your students).



# Avoid the Following Actions- in order to protect yourself

Avoid suspicion or accusations of abuse or misconduct

- Frequent hugging or touching of a student
- Being alone with a student, particularly a teen, of the opposite sex
- Meeting a student, alone, after school hours or on the weekends

