

#ABC Conduct

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Educators have a visible place in their communities. The choices they make, even when well-intended, can affect their jobs, families, schools and profession. The Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Education Association and Ohio Federation of Teachers, supported by BASA, OASSA and OAESA offer this series of tip sheets on how to recognize situations that can get good educators in trouble. #ABCConduct Tip Sheets are designed to help educators identify and mitigate risks that occur in everyday situations. These tip sheets provide guidance for best practices and are not intended to be used in disciplinary actions.

The Ups and Downs of Ms. Sparrow

Jackie Sparrow is a third-year, eighth-grade science teacher. Students think the young Ms. Sparrow is cool because she has a laid-back attitude and does engaging science experiments. In fact, they view her as a friend. Ms. Sparrow's sixth-period class is her brightest and favorite. Her third-period class is her remedial class and the one she finds most difficult to teach. To control class behavior, she regularly

threatens to release her third-period students late to lunch. Ms. Sparrow chooses a class helper for each group. Stevie, her sixth-period helper, is by far her favorite student, so she gives him special privileges, such as a study hall pass he uses to come to her classroom. Ms. Sparrow prepared a lesson for sixth period on force and motion, including YouTube videos on how roller coasters are

built. While students watched them, she graded their science reports. When she had to leave the classroom, she left Stevie in charge to play the videos in her absence. When Ms. Sparrow returned 10 minutes later to find the class watching an inappropriate cartoon, she walked to her computer and switched back to the videos about roller coasters. While there, she noticed she left the class grade book open.

Where did Ms. Sparrow go off the tracks?

1. Showing favorites: Ms. Sparrow favored individual classes and students by giving them special treatment. Educators should avoid the appearance of favoritism toward students or groups of students because it can fracture a teacher's relationship with other students and classes.
2. Rewarding and punishing: Ms. Sparrow shouldn't reward Stevie with study hall passes so he can hang out with her in her classroom. This could create the appearance of an inappropriate relationship and does not maximize Stevie's learning time. She also shouldn't use lunch detention regularly for poor behavior. Educators should model appropriate classroom management techniques used by other educators and administrators or taught through professional development.
3. Failure to supervise: Ms. Sparrow shouldn't have left her students without adult supervision. They took advantage of her trust to watch an inappropriate video. Educators should follow building policies for adult coverage of the classroom when they must leave their students.
4. Failure to safeguard confidential material: Ms. Sparrow should have concealed her grade book from students. Educators' desks and computer logins can provide access to grades, IEPs and other sensitive information. A teacher should always secure confidential information.





DO's & DON'Ts

—with—
Crystal Clear



- DO** refer to board policy and licensure code before giving students gifts, money or food.
- DO** remain objective when discussing sensitive or political topics.
- DO** refrain from using sarcasm and inappropriate language in the classroom.
- DO** protect confidential student information such as grades, IEPs and 504 plans.

- DON'T** leave students unattended in a classroom, on a field trip or during school activities.
- DON'T** let students access a computer with an educator login.
- DON'T** share personally identifying information about students with other students, parents or community members.
- DON'T** let outside relationships (scouts, neighborhood, family connections) affect your professional relationship with students.

Make Professional Choices

Coach Bull learns that senior football players use an obstacle course to haze the freshman. The coach reminds the team that hazing isn't tolerated but doesn't stop the seniors or report the incident to the administration.

Unprofessional choice: Educators should follow district policy for reporting bullying and hazing.

Ms. Bingley and her classroom aide don't get along. One day, Ms. Bingley became angry with the aide and called her "a garbage human being" in front of students.

Unprofessional choice: Even if personalities conflict, educators are expected to treat each other with respect always.

Coach Jones's basketball team was poised to clinch the division title but was losing at half time. Then, he noticed the star player intentionally fouling and nearly injuring an opposing team member. He pulled her out to speak with her, saying he would bench her if she continued.

Professional choice: Coach Jones promoted sportsmanship over winning.

Mr. Green, a history teacher, starts class with a current events discussion every day. He has very strong political beliefs and sometimes cuts students off when their opinions differ from his.

Unprofessional choice: Educators must be objective and support open, respectful discussions with students.

Students view Mr. Clemens as the funniest teacher in school. His quick-witted sarcasm flows so naturally that he sometimes calls students offensive names.

Unprofessional choice: Use sarcasm sparingly in the classroom. It can be hurtful and insulting.