

Whittier Union High School District

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WHITTIER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT



...to achieve and maintain excellence...

March 2011

Whittier Union High School District

ETHICAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES



Professional Conduct

Honesty
Responsibility
Respect
Ethics
Integrity
Values
Cooperation

Superintendent's Letter

In pursuit of our commitment to provide a high quality education to our students, all employees of the Whittier Union High School District are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards in the performance of their duties. Conduct based on clear, ethical standards including honesty, integrity, respect, responsibility, fairness, compassion, cooperation and civic duty not only demonstrates your ability to use sound judgment and make ethical decisions, it is an endorsement of the moral values we teach our student every day. When your actions are based on these shared values we, as individuals and as an organization, reflect to others in the workplace and the community that a deeper sense of purpose and direction guides us in our work.

Please carefully review the contents of this pamphlet which includes the new Board Policy, Professional Standards. All District staff are to respect and follow the principles of this policy and have it serve as guidance to you about ethical decision-making in your District role.

Sandra Thorstenson, Superintendent

Definitions

Ethics—Derived from “ethos” meaning way of life based on a set of moral principles and values which influence the decisions we make. As public employees we have a duty to exhibit these shared values in all of the decisions we make and actions we take.

Ethical Standards—Keeping the well-being of students at the forefront, District employees shall fulfill all aspects of their professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity and without intent for personal gain.

Ethical Conduct—To adhere to the ethical standards, staff shall be fair and objective in the work place, committed to conducting themselves within the highest standards of professional and personal ethics.

Expectations of Personal and Professional

Integrity—In the course of daily business, staff shall be honest, avoid conflicts of interest and preferential treatment involving individuals, groups and themselves, and demonstrate personal and professional responsibility at all times.

Ethics Issue Areas

- Personal behavior toward others which is inappropriate and/or unwelcome
- Misuse of District resources
- Failure to perform required duties
- Misstating hours
- Conflict of interests
- Favoritism
- Misconduct toward employees
- Accepting gifts
- Fraud
- Failure to follow District purchasing guidelines
- Retaliation
- Theft

Board Policy—Professional Standards

(Board 1-17-06)

The Board of Trustees expects District employees to maintain the highest ethical standards, follow District policies and regulations, and abide by state and federal laws. Employee conduct should enhance the integrity of the District and advance the goals of the educational programs. Each employee should make a commitment to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill his/her responsibilities and should focus on his/her contribution to the learning and achievement of District students.

The Board of Trustees encourages District employees to accept the Five Guiding Principles of Commitment to the Student, Commitment to the Students' Parents and Families, Commitment to the Profession, Commitment to Certificated and Classified Colleagues and Commitment to the Business Community.

Five Guiding Principles of Commitment

Commitment to the Student—The core of all District staff's work is student learning and safety. Stimulate the spirit of inquiry, understanding and the acquisition of knowledge in students, but realize that a safe learning environment is the optimal setting for student's learning. Serve as a model of ethical standards, continually reflecting on your actions as educators and support staff and how they apply to our District, school, classroom, curriculum, and our profession.

- Strive through fair, just, and respectful treatment of all students to help them achieve and succeed.

- Make every effort to protect students from conditions harmful to learning or their health and safety.
- Protect students from embarrassment and disparagement.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding any student information obtained in the source of professional service unless disclosure is compelled for a professional purpose or is required by law.
- Guard against unfair treatment of any student based on race, ethnicity, gender, creed, national origin, political or religious beliefs, family social or cultural background, sexual orientation or disabilities.
- Use professional relationships with students only for student benefit.
- Always maintain a positive and appropriate student-teacher relationship.

Commitment to the Students' Parents and Families—The learning of our students extends outside the classroom to the student's home. It is essential for the school and home to interact frequently for the benefit of students. A partnership of responsibility with parents is a pact that acknowledges, respects, and appreciates the role that each has in the education of all students. Collaboration with parents on student academic progress, curriculum, and classroom and school practices, optimizes the chances of all students for success in school and life.

- Develop understanding and respect of community cultures in order to relate the student's home environment to their school environment.
- Maintain regular communication with parents regarding student progress or problems, and respond in a timely manner to any special request from parents for information or communication.
- Offer alternative choices to students and parents in the event that materials being taught conflict with home values.
- Treat all students equitably and free from bias and defensiveness in cases of negative parental involvement or conflict.
- Keep relationships with parents positive and refrain from any relationship with parents which are or may be perceived to be for personal advantage.

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Commitment to the Profession—The quality of the education profession directly influences our nation and all of its citizens. Therefore, every effort to raise professional standards, improve service and promote a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged. All education professionals have a personal obligation to act and speak at all times in a manner which exemplifies personal integrity, dignity and mutual respect.

- Interact positively with others, including students, staff, parents, and representatives of the community. Keep in mind that your words and actions reflect on your school, the District and the education profession.
- Conduct business of the school and/or District through the proper channels.
- Strive to align your actions with professional values and beliefs to enhance personal and organizational effectiveness.
- Adhere to established professional standards.
- Work and share collaboratively with colleagues to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Refrain from accepting or offering gifts or favors that might impair or appear to impair professional judgment or gain special advantage.

Commitment to Certificated and Classified Colleagues—Work relationships with colleagues should exemplify respect and professionalism. Accord equitable treatment to all District personnel; carry-out your responsibilities in a professional manner; expect and respect the same of your colleagues.

- Act in a spirit of collaboration and protect fellow employees from intentional embarrassment or disparagement.
- Treat all staff equitable and free from bias and/or a defensive retaliatory manner.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding information obtained about colleagues in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a required professional purpose or is compelled by law.
- Present perspectives and opinions on work-related issues in ways that are professional and do not undermine the integrity and decisions of colleagues and supervisors.

- Refrain from making false or malicious statements about a colleague.
- Maintain work relationships that are not in any way unfairly influenced by race, ethnicity, creed, gender, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social, or cultural background, sexual orientation or disability.

Commitment to the Business Community—When interacting with the business community exhibit conduct which exemplifies the highest professional and ethical standards and reflects positively on you and the District.

- Deal with suppliers, vendors, contractors, or other business professionals in a manner which demonstrates the District's commitment to the highest ethical standards, and Five Guiding Principles.
- Act with and model exemplary personal integrity in all business relationships.
- Place the needs of students, schools, and facilities foremost in making recommendations and decisions about District business matters.
- Represent the District in a fair and positive light.
- Obey the law in its word, spirit and intent at all times while performing duties.
- Exercise great care and good judgment in order to avoid situations that may compromise the reputation of the District.
- Seek guidance when in doubt about District procedures, policies, or laws pertaining to procurement and other business practice.

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If you collect money from students, parents, boosters, or others be advised that new audit requirements (SAS99) address fraud in school districts. To minimize your personal exposure and that of the District follow these guidelines:

1. Have approval from the Principal before you collect any funds.
2. Do not keep money in desks or other unsecured locations.
3. Do not take money back and forth from home to school. Only the ASB Bookkeeper should secure funds.

4. Do not have money mailed to your home. Only authorized fund raising through ASB is appropriate.
5. Count collected funds with the ASB Bookkeeper or Administrator.
6. Keep accurate records of collections, deposits, expenditures.
7. Do not have purchases made with collected funds sent to your home; have it shipped to the school office.

Reporting Ethics Violations

Reporting ethics violations is required when you suspect the decisions and/or actions of another employee are contrary to the spirit or intent of the District's professional standards policy. Violators should be reported to your immediate supervisors or Administrator. When this is not possible, the school department or division Administrator should be contacted. The same process should be followed for reporting fraud or other violations of law. The District also encourages the use of We-Tip a 24 hour-a-day, 365 days-a-year anonymous hotline service that employees can use for reporting—(800) 581-1400 or www.wetip.com.

Reporting Requirements

- * Report fraud or other illegal acts—CA Ed. Code 8448-8451, 87160-87164
- * Report improper conduct—CA Ed. Code 44110
- * Conflicts of interest and outside income—CA Gov. Code Sections 87100, 87103, 87200, 1090, 1098, 1126
- * Decline gifts—CA Gov. Code Sections 98500, 89503
- * Keep colleagues safe from retaliation—CA Ed. Code 44113
- * Maintain appropriate relationships with students—CA Ed. Code 44932
- * Improper influence of family members and associates—CA Gov. Code Sections 87100-87103
- * Requirements for proper contracting and procurement—CA Gov. Code Section 109