

CODE OF ETHICS

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

This Code of Ethics is a guide to teachers in maintaining, at all times, the high traditions of their profession.

I. Teacher and Pupil

- (a) The teacher regards as confidential, and does not divulge other than through professional channels any information of a personal or domestic nature, concerning either pupils or home, obtained through the course of his/her professional duties.
- (b) The teacher should be just and impartial in all relationships with pupils.
- (c) The teacher should assume responsibility for the safety and welfare of his/her pupils, especially under conditions of emergency.
- (d) The teacher should avoid giving offence to the religious and political beliefs and moral scruples of his/her pupils and/or their parents.
- (e) The teacher should be as objective as possible in dealing with controversial matters arising out of the curriculum subjects, whether scientific or political, religious or racial.

II. Teacher and Teacher

- (a) The teacher should not make defamatory, disparaging, condescending, embarrassing, or offensive comments concerning another teacher.
- (b) The teacher shall not make derogatory remarks about the professional competence of another teacher.
- (c) The teacher shall not accept the position of another teacher who has been dismissed unjustly.
- (d) The teacher shall not accept a position arising out of the unsettled dispute between a teacher, or teachers, and local authorities.
- (e) The teacher shall not sexually harass another teacher. Sexual harassment shall mean any unsolicited and unwanted sexual comments, suggestions or physical contact directed to a specific teacher which that teacher finds objectionable or offensive and which causes the teacher discomfort on the job. The accused teacher must be made aware of the nature of the objection prior to action being taken.

III. Teacher and Internal Administration

- (a) The teacher should observe a reasonable and proper loyalty to internal administration of the school.
- (b) The teacher responsible for internal administration should be loyal, fair, and just to the members of the staff.
- (c) The teacher responsible for internal administration should not of his/her own initiative, make any detrimental report, oral or written, on a teacher's efficiency without first discussing the matter with the teacher.

IV. Teacher and External Administration

- (a) The teacher should adhere to a contract until the contract has been terminated by mutual consent, or the contract has otherwise been legally terminated. A verbal agreement is a contract.
- (b) The teacher should not accept a salary below that which he/she would receive according to the scale negotiated between the NSTU and the school board.
- (c) The teacher should not accept a salary above that which he/she would receive according to the scale negotiated between the NSTU and the school board, without notifying the Local of the NSTU which is concerned.

V. Teacher and Professional Organization

- (a) The teacher should be a member of and participate in the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.
- (b) The teacher who in his/her professional capacity is a member of a committee, board, or authority dealing with matters affecting the educational program of Nova Scotia as a whole should be elected, appointed, or approved by the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.
- (c) The teacher, or group of teachers, should not take any individual action in matters which should be dealt with by his/her Local or by the NSTU.
- (d) The Local should not take any individual action in matters where the assistance of the NSTU has been sought, or in matters requiring the authorization of the NSTU.

VI. Teacher and Profession

- (a) The teacher should maintain his/her efficiency by study, by travel or by other means which will keep him/her abreast of the trends in education and the world in which we live.
- (b) The teacher should engage in no gainful employment, outside of his/her contract, where the employment affects adversely his/her professional status, or impairs his/her standing with students, associates, and the community.
- (c) The teacher should not accept remuneration for tutoring his/her pupils except under unusual circumstances and with the approval of his/her supervisor or principal.

VII. Teacher and Community

- (a) The teacher should so conduct himself/herself in his/her private life that no dishonour may befall him/her or through him/her, his/her profession.

This text is a summary for information purposes only. Full details may be found in the official text of the NSTU Guidebook, comprising the Constitution, Policy and Operational Procedures of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.



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PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE

The committee that preserves
and defends the integrity of
the teaching profession.



**Nova Scotia
Teachers Union**

PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE

Pursuant to the Teaching Profession Act, Section 11(1), there shall be a committee of the Council to be called the Professional Committee:

- (a) The Professional Committee shall consist of six (6) members selected by the delegates voting at an Annual Council, and no member shall be at the same time a member of the Executive or a Committee of the Executive.
- (b) The Professional Committee may inquire into any charge and determine if a teacher has been guilty of conduct unbecoming a member of the teaching profession.
- (c) A complaint against the conduct of a member of the type referred to in Section (b), may be made by the Executive of a Local, a Local, or by the Provincial Executive of the Union.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

AUTHORITY

Pursuant to the Teaching Profession Act, Section 11(1) the NSTU makes reference to the composition and mandate of the Professional Committee in Article VI(2) of the By-Laws of the NSTU.

MANDATE

Issues to be dealt with by the Professional Committee (the “Committee”) include conduct unbecoming a member of the teaching profession.

DUE PROCESS

The concept of due process requires that the Committee must ensure that all who appear before it are fairly heard. The process of hearing fairly must involve the following principles:

- (1) An individual must have a clear statement of the complaint against him/her.
- (2) The individual must have the right to attend in person and be represented by counsel.
- (3) An individual must have the right to contradict the evidence against him/her by means of contrary statements or cross-examination.

NOTICE

A charge filed pursuant to Section 11 of the *Teaching Profession Act* shall be made to the Committee, shall identify the teacher, shall identify the conduct complained of, shall be sufficiently detailed to allow a reasonable individual or his or her solicitor an opportunity to prepare an adequate response and a copy of the charge shall be filed with the Provincial Executive and the Executive Director.

Upon receipt of a charge the Executive Director shall, as soon as practicable,

1. Advise the teacher that the charge has been filed and provide a copy of the charge;
2. Provide copies to all members of the Professional Committee.

The Executive Director, after consulting the members of the Professional Committee, shall set a hearing date and shall not less than 30 days before the hearing date cause to be served on the teacher, a notice of the hearing date stating the date, time and place at which the Committee will hold the hearing and the notice shall further advise the teacher the right to appear in person, with or without counsel, and that the Committee may proceed at the hearing and dispose of the charge in the absence of the teacher complained of in the event of that teacher’s failure to appear at the hearing.

MATTERS TO BE PROVED

The *Teaching Profession Act* indicates that the complainant must prove that the teacher charged is “guilty of conduct unbecoming a member of the teaching profession.”

The term “unbecoming conduct” may include:

- (a) violation of the Code of Ethics;
- (b) infamous conduct which is conduct likely to scandalize the community with which the profession must deal.

ACTION OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

- (1) If the charge is not proved in the opinion of the Committee, the Committee may dismiss the charge.
- (2) The Committee may apply either internal or external sanctions:
 - (a) *Internal:*
 - (i) The Committee may decide that the member be reprimanded.
 - (ii) The Committee may decide that the membership of the teacher in the NSTU be suspended for a stated term of time.
 - (iii) The Committee may decide that the member be expelled.
 - (b) *External:*
 - (i) The Committee may decide to recommend to the Minister that the teacher’s license be suspended for a term of time.
 - (ii) The Committee may decide to recommend to the Minister that the teacher’s certificate be cancelled.

IMPLEMENTATION

The decision of the committee shall be filed with the Provincial Executive, and it shall be the responsibility of the Provincial Executive to implement the decision.