

# **Standards of Professional Conduct**

## **Watson School of Education**

### **University of North Carolina Wilmington**

#### **Preamble**

Educators are entrusted with the care and education of learners at all levels; therefore, they must adhere to a high standard of personal character and conduct in order to serve as positive role models for pupils, families/caregivers, and the community. Professional responsibility begins with a prospective educator's initial association with the Watson School of Education and continues after their admission as a candidate for licensure. All students associated with the WSE, prior to and after admission to the school, must accept the responsibility for adhering to high ethical standards, as they make a commitment to serve pupils, schools, and their profession. Commitment to ethical and professional standards is expected to continue as candidates are licensed and assume their professional roles. All policies, procedures and regulations contained in the *UNCW Code of Student Life* also apply.

The WSE Standards of Professional Conduct incorporate the following:

- the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators (adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education, June 5, 1997; [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org));
- the Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for North Carolina Educators, effective April 1, 1998 (Section 0.600; [www.ncpublicschools.org/teacher\\_education/conductcode.htm](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/teacher_education/conductcode.htm)); and
- the Watson School of Education professional expectations as identified in the Performance Evaluation Scale exit criteria.

Adherence to these professional standards is expected during all aspects of students' matriculation and career with the WSE, including practica and field activities. Violations of these Standards of Professional Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to withdrawal from courses (including those that require field experiences and practica) and/or dismissal from the teacher education program. Students are also subject to discipline for misconduct as stated in the *UNCW Code of Student Life*.

#### **Commitment to the Education Profession**

1. Understands, respects and applies principles of teaching and learning and content knowledge relevant to the area of licensure;
2. Pursues growth and development in the theory, principles, and practices of the profession and uses knowledge and skills appropriately to improve the educational opportunities, experiences, and performance of student learners and colleagues.

3. Demonstrates appropriate behaviors, attitudes and skills related to the conduct of a professional educator, such as the following:
  - attire appropriate to the setting,
  - punctuality,
  - attendance,
  - professional interactions with peers, faculty, staff, and administrators as well as field-based personnel,
  - development and use of appropriate professional language in oral and written communications, and
  - adherence to institutional policies and procedures.
4. Provides accurate and truthful credentials and information regarding admission, requirements for licensure, and in all interactions with faculty and staff.

### **Commitment to Schools and School Systems**

1. Contributes to a classroom climate conducive to learning.
2. Promotes optimal learning opportunities for all those engaged in the educational setting on-campus, on-line or in field experiences and/or practica.
3. Acknowledges and supports diverse views of students, parents and legal guardians, and colleagues as they work collaboratively to shape educational goals, policies, and decisions; does not proselytize for personal viewpoints that are outside the scope of professional practice.
4. Participates positively, collegially and cooperatively in campus-based coursework, school/community-based work and in other professional decision-making processes.
5. When acting in a professional capacity:
  - A. Acts fairly, consistently, and prudently in the exercise of authority.
  - B. Protects the rights of others in the educational setting, and does not retaliate, coerce, or intentionally intimidate others in the exercise of their rights protected by law.
6. Acts and speaks respectfully in educational settings as a representative of UNCW, the Watson School of Education and its programs.

## **Commitment to Students**

1. Supports, acknowledges and respects diversity among individuals in all educational settings.
2. Sets high expectations for all students and provides various methods and opportunities for students to achieve goals.
3. Protects students from conditions within the educator's control that circumvent learning or are detrimental to the health and safety of students.
4. Manages student behavior fairly and consistently. Influences student behavior in positive ways while maintaining students' dignity;
5. Assesses students and assigns grades based upon the students' demonstrated competency, merit, and performance, without regard to personal factors that are irrelevant to the program involved.
6. Holds in confidence information learned in professional practice and contained in educational records except when disclosure is required by pertinent regulations or statutes.
7. Treats all students with respect and maintains an appropriate relationship with students in all settings. The educator will not commit any abusive act or sexual exploitation with, to, or in the presence of a student, whether or not that student is or has been under the care or supervision of that educator, as defined below:
  - a. Speech that is considered abusive, profane, vulgar, demeaning or obscene
  - b. Acts of child abuse, as defined by law
  - c. Any provision, sale or supply of alcohol or drugs
  - d. Any act of harassment based on sex, race, religion, disability, age, and national origin as defined by policy and law and
  - e. Any intentional solicitation, encouragement, whether written, verbal, or physical, or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a P-12 student, or any sexual contact with a P-12 student. The term "romantic relationship" shall include dating any P-12 student.