Student Teaching Handbook

Education Services
College of Education
The University of Texas at Austin
Dr. Sharon H. Evans, Director

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Section I: General Information

Introduction

Student teaching is one of the most informative, challenging, and rewarding experiences in your professional development as a teacher, one that will provide you with many opportunities to refine your skills. All of us at UT and your cooperating teachers in the schools are committed to helping you become as fine a teacher as your capabilities and dedication allow.

One of the first ways you can help insure a satisfactory experience for yourself is to read this handbook carefully and follow the advice given. The information in this handbook may directly affect the success of your student teaching experience, so please be sure you are familiar with its contents.

Responsibilities

Everyone involved in the student teaching program--you, your cooperating teacher, your university field supervisor--has well-defined responsibilities. We want to do everything we can to make certain that these expectations are met so that everyone enjoys a positive experience. If you have concerns about your student teaching experience, you should make them known to your cooperating teacher and your university field supervisor. You should also contact Dr. Sharon H. Evans, Director of Field Experiences, SZB 244 at 471-1511 if you have concerns that may require additional assistance from the Field Experience Office. Of course, all of your concerns will be kept confidential.

The teachers and mentors associated with student teaching are highly professional and competent. But unforeseen problems may arise from time to time, and it is important that you let someone know about your concerns so that they can be dealt with right away. Do not wait until the end of the semester to seek assistance with a lingering problem or misunderstanding.

Responsibilities of Student Teacher

1. Meet the principal and assistant principal and become familiar with the school climate and culture.
2. Know and follow the rules, regulations, and policies of the school. This includes the use of any confidential information you may obtain through student records, conversations, etc. Uphold school safety standards and understand school emergency response procedures.
3. Maintain an ethical and professional attitude toward all members of the school community. In part, this means holding in confidence your personal opinions about people with whom you interact (students, teachers, staff, parents, and administrators). Read and sign an agreement to abide by the Texas Administrative Code 247, Educators Code of Ethics (http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?si=R&app=9&p_din=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&ppg=1&p_tac=&&i=19&p_l=7&ch=247&rl=2) Also included at the end of this handbook.
4. Recognize and accept that the cooperating teacher has the ultimate responsibility for what you may or may not do in the classroom.
5. Make yourself available for regular planning and feedback sessions with your cooperating teacher and university field supervisor.
6. Make adequate lesson plans in advance of teaching assignments and share copies with the cooperating teacher and university field supervisor. Make revisions as recommended by your cooperating teacher, and obtain final approval prior to lesson implementation.
7. Attend all required student teaching and related seminars.
8. Dress in a professional manner.
9. Assess your growth as a teacher throughout the semester.
10. Integrate technology-learning tools to enhance instruction and learning, and to support your own pre-professional growth.
11. Demonstrate professionalism through punctuality and accurate, courteous communication.
Responsibilities of Cooperating Teacher

1. In all interactions, treat the student teacher as a professional.
2. Introduce the student teacher to the class on the first day of attendance.
3. Acquaint the student teacher with materials and resources available in the school on the first day or soon thereafter.
4. Require lesson plans from the student teacher in advance of the actual teaching. Review these plans carefully, recommend revision as needed, and approve final plans prior to implementation.
5. Allow the student teacher to assume responsibilities as soon as the student teacher exhibits the readiness to do so. Early in the semester, work with your student teacher to develop a Student Plan to pace and scaffold increasing teaching responsibilities.
6. Encourage the student teacher to be creative and to try new teaching strategies.
7. Require lesson plans from the student teacher in advance of the teaching assignments.
8. Conduct regular cooperative planning sessions with the student teacher. There should be one session at the beginning of the semester followed by weekly and/or daily sessions.
9. Observe the student teacher teaching on a regular basis and provide a written copy of your observation to both the student teacher and university field supervisor.
10. Provide an organized feedback session for each observation (in addition to incidental observations and remarks) and provide the student teacher and university field supervisor with a written summary of the feedback session.
11. Complete two student teaching evaluation forms, the Formative Assessment at mid-semester and the Summative Assessment at the end of the semester. Cite specific examples of the observed behaviors as supporting evidence and submit the form electronically. Discuss each evaluation with the student teacher. At mid-semester, concrete suggestions for improvement should be identified and then communicated in writing to all parties involved.

Responsibilities of University Field Supervisor

1. Assist in the placement of student teachers, as specified by the Director of Education Services or the UT coordinator.
2. Provide an orientation meeting for all student teachers under your supervision. Provide and/or attend an orientation for your cooperating teachers. Share the Guiding Student Teachers Handbook with cooperating teachers.
3. Conduct a minimum of three student teaching seminars. Establish equitable procedures for scheduling observations and conferences.
4. Review the Student Plan for appropriate pacing and scaffolding of broad planning and teaching experiences to promote increasing self-directions and competence. Provide guidance to both the student teacher and cooperating teacher with respect to the pacing of experiences and steady development of the student teacher’s professional competencies.
5. Observe each student teacher on a regular basis and provide the student teacher and the cooperating teacher with a written account of your observations. Elementary university field supervisors usually visit the student teacher once a week; secondary/all-level vary from 4-7 times during the semester (in some cases, more observations are needed).
6. Monitor the progress of each student teacher and maintain regular communication with each cooperating teacher.
7. Conduct an individual feedback session for each observation made and provide the student teacher and cooperating teacher with a written summary of the results.
8. Help student teachers with any problems that may arise in their student teaching assignments. If problems warrant the attention of the Director of Education Services, call 471-1511 anytime during office hours.
9. Conduct a three-way mid-term and final three-way conference with the cooperating teacher and student teacher to discuss the evaluation of the student teacher.
10. Complete the Formative Assessment at mid-semester and the Summative Assessment at the end of the semester. Cite specific examples of observed behaviors as supporting evidence. Discuss each evaluation with the student teacher. At mid-semester, concrete suggestions for improvement should be identified and then communicated in writing to the student teacher and cooperating teacher.
11. Keep a file of memos, announcements, and all communication pertaining to the responsibilities of a university field supervisor. Maintain communications by checking your e-mail and telephone messages daily and responding promptly. The university field supervisor must be available for communications and meet deadlines.
12. Communicate with your coordinator on a regular basis to ensure that you are both up-to-date on your student teacher’s progress in the schools.

Your Assignment

Your student teaching assignment has been made with much care and attention to the suitability of your placement. Changes in assignments are not made after student teaching begins except in highly unusual circumstances. If you experience what seem to be insurmountable problems with your placement, please notify your field supervisor at once.

It is important for you to recognize that you are a guest in the school, and that your cooperating teacher bears the responsibility of determining what is best for her or his students. It is up to the classroom teacher to determine what responsibilities you will assume and when. If you demonstrate competence, responsibility, and tact, you will likely have many opportunities to begin teaching early in your experience and to try innovative teaching strategies. If you experience any problems, be sure to inform your university field supervisor as soon as possible.

Professional Liability

As a student teacher, you are entitled to the same protection of law accorded to the cooperating teacher and the principal in the school where you are assigned. This protection does not apply in cases where there is use of excessive force in the discipline of students or negligence resulting in bodily injury to students. Nor does the protection apply to the operation or use of any motor vehicle.

The University has not provided you with liability insurance and you may want to look into insurance coverage offered by organizations such as ATPE and TCTA. This means that in the weeks before Total Teach, you should not be left alone on a regular basis with your class for extended periods of time (small pull-out groups are fine). In addition, you should not be left alone on a playground or field trip with a group of students without a licensed teacher within “shouting distance.” These rules are for your own protection and it is important that you alert your university field supervisor immediately if they are being violated.

The University has not provided you with liability insurance and you may want to look into insurance coverage offered by organizations such as ATPE and TCTA. This means that in the weeks before Total Teach, you should not be left alone on a regular basis with your class for extended periods of time (small pull-out groups are fine). In addition, you should not be left alone on a playground or field trip with a group of students without a licensed teacher within “shouting distance.” These rules are for your own protection and it is important that you alert your university field supervisor immediately if they are being violated.
If you have been approved as a substitute teacher in the district in which you are student teaching, you are protected with liability insurance by the school district on days you serve as a substitute. However, it is still recommended that you consider the purchase of additional health and liability coverage.

Different school districts have different policies when it comes to permitting student teachers to serve as substitutes. Make certain that you understand what your district’s particular policies are before you get involved in what could be a “sticky” situation. When in doubt, check with your university field supervisor.

**Calendar**

University regulations require that all instructors follow the University Course Schedule as printed unless all students in a given course agree at the beginning of the semester to a modified schedule. There may be times when the University has a holiday and the schools are in session. You cannot be required to attend your student teaching assignment on these days. However, for many of you this break in your contact with the classroom could interfere with a sequence of instruction. In these cases, you may wish to proceed with your student teaching. If you do take the University holiday, then you are required to provide the cooperating teacher with lesson plans for these days so that your absence will not be detrimental to the children. For those days on which the school district has a holiday and the University is in session, your university field supervisor may require you to attend sessions on campus. No student teachers will be excused on these days. If the school or school district is conducting inservice sessions on staff development days, then you are expected to attend these sessions unless your university field supervisor notifies you that the school district or campus principal has specifically indicated that student teachers should not attend.

**Absences**

Perfect attendance during the internship/student teaching is expected. Documented medical emergencies and coordinator-approved absences must be made up. Any other absences may result in either non-credit for the corresponding course to fieldwork (TYC, Classroom Management, Student Teaching) and/or documentation of “Unacceptable” on the final Summative Assessment unless approved by coordinator. The period of time spent in the classrooms this semester is minimal, yet critical. It is very important that the interns/student teachers be present at all times during this part of their training program. If an intern/student teacher must be absent because of a medical emergency, she/he will need to contact both the cooperating teacher and the university field supervisor, as soon as possible. Coordinators will require missed day(s) to be made up at the end of the semester. Interns/student teachers are expected to be in the school for the entire designated period and to follow the school’s faculty handbook for the times they are to report to and leave the school. Tardiness is unacceptable. Tardiness must be documented in the same way as above, or recorded on the Formative Assessment or Summative Assessment.

If for some reason the intern/student teacher must be absent, she/he must notify both the cooperating teacher and university field supervisor as far ahead of time as possible. The intern/student teacher should also assume responsibility for sending plans and/or materials to the school if such was her/his responsibility for that day. The intern/student teacher must make arrangements for the make-up day at the time of absence(s). Failure to notify the specified individuals may result in the termination of the intern/student teaching assignment. It is also the responsibility of each student to notify the university field supervisor and cooperating teacher in advance that she/he will be absent from class for a religious holiday and to receive advance approval for scheduling make-up time and work.

If at any time, in the judgment of the university field supervisor, cooperating teacher, and/or coordinator, an intern/student teacher’s absences or tardies are excessive, the intern/student teaching assignment may be terminated.

**Student Teaching Evaluation**

A copy of the student teacher Summative Assessment form will be given to you at the start of the semester. This form will be completed by both your University field supervisor and cooperating teacher at the end of the semester. You should become familiar with this form and seek feedback from your university field supervisor and cooperating teacher throughout the semester with respect to the categories included.

At the end of the semester, you will review these evaluation forms and submit them electronically. Your signature indicates that you have reviewed the forms, not that you necessarily agree with them.

You can usually expect that the evaluation by your university field supervisor will vary somewhat from that of the cooperating teacher. They will have seen you at different times doing different things so they likely may develop some different impressions.

**Outside Responsibilities**

Outside activities (e.g., employment, sports, sororities, fraternities) should be held to a minimum during student teaching. During this period of time, your first responsibility is to the students you teach. Outside responsibilities should not interfere with your student teaching responsibilities.

**Words to the Wise**

1. Instructional materials prepared using supplies provided by the school usually remain with the school at the completion of the student teaching assignment. If you know that you will want to keep some of the instructional materials for your own future use, check with your school's policy and then decide whether you will want to purchase the necessary supplies yourself.
2. **Administering medicine to your students is not permitted at any time.** Even if your cooperating teacher gives you the “go ahead”, you must adhere to University policy as your reason for doing so.
3. **Corporal punishment (even in the mildest form) is not permitted at any time.** Be very careful of the ways in which you touch your students, especially when you become angry or frustrated.
4. Do not drive your own car to take students on a field trip or to deliver them anywhere away from campus. You could be legally liable for any accidents or injuries.
5. Make sure to make healthy choices about your diet, exercise, and rest. It is critical that you take care of yourself during student teaching so that you may meet the rigorous demands that the semester imposes.
6. Should you be asked to substitute for your cooperating teacher during student teaching, contact your university field supervisor immediately. Students will be allowed to substitute for their own cooperating teacher only and on a very limited basis with the following conditions: A) they must be registered and have completed training with the district's substitute office, and B) prior authorization for substituting must be secured in agreement with the university field supervisor, cooperating teacher, campus principal, and the student.
7. Grading papers only for the subjects you are teaching is a practice you are encouraged to follow during student teaching. If you are experiencing pressure from your cooperating teacher to grade papers of students with whom you do not work, you should notify your university field supervisor immediately.

8. Writing lesson plans during class time is not permitted during times when students are in the classroom. When you are not teaching, you should observe your cooperating teacher and/or monitor your students as they work.

9. First impressions are extremely important in the public schools. Dress like a professional at all times. This is not to suggest that you have to purchase an expensive wardrobe. It is advisable; however, that you ask about the dress code and observe what the faculty members are wearing and then dress accordingly. Some districts provide written dress codes for teachers on district Web sites or in faculty handbooks. Good grooming is part of the professional image you create.

A Final Word

You now must accept the responsibility of completing this important experience successfully. Give it your best effort. What you do during your student teaching will become the beginning of your professional record of accomplishments. Be sure to communicate with both your cooperating teacher and the university field supervisor at all times. If you encounter any serious problem, talk to someone and correct the problem. If you think that it would be helpful to obtain assistance from another professional, then get in touch with Dr. Sharon H. Evans, Director of Education Services, Sanchez Building 244, at 471-1511.

GOOD LUCK!

Section II: Educator’s Code of Ethics

Texas Administrative Code

Chapter 247. Educators’ Code of Ethics

§247.1. Purpose and Scope; Definitions.

(a) In compliance with the Texas Education Code, §21.041(b)(8), the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) adopts an Educators’ Code of Ethics as set forth in §247.2 of this title (relating to Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators). The SBEC may amend the ethics code in the same manner as any other formal rule.

(b) The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification.

(c) The SBEC is solely responsible for enforcing the Educators’ Code of Ethics for purposes related to certification disciplinary proceedings. The Educators’ Code of Ethics is enforced through the disciplinary procedure set forth in Chapter 249 of this title (relating to Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases) pursuant to the purposes stated therein.

(d) As provided in §249.5 of this title (relating to Purpose; Policy Governing Disciplinary Proceedings), the primary goals the SBEC seeks to achieve in educator disciplinary matters are:

1. to protect the safety and welfare of Texas schoolchildren and school personnel;
2. to ensure educators and applicants are morally fit and worthy to instruct or to supervise the youth of the state; and
3. to fairly and efficiently resolve educator disciplinary proceedings at the least expense possible to the parties and the state.

(e) The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

1. Abuse—Includes the following acts or omissions:
   (A) mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
   (B) causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
   (C) physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or
   (D) sexual conduct harmful to a student's or minor's mental, emotional, or physical welfare.
(2) Applicant--A party seeking issuance, renewal, or reinstatement of a certificate from the Texas Education Agency staff or the State Board for Educator Certification.

(3) Code of Ethics--The Educators' Code of Ethics codified in this chapter.

(4) Complaint--A written statement submitted to the Texas Education Agency staff that contains essential facts alleging improper conduct by an educator, applicant, or examinee, the complainant's verifiable contact information, including full name, complete address, and phone number, which provides grounds for sanctions.

(5) Contested case--A proceeding under this chapter in which the legal rights, duties, and privileges related to a party’s educator certificate are to be determined by the State Board for Educator Certification and/or the State Office of Administrative Hearings commencing when a petition is properly served under this chapter.

(6) Disciplinary proceedings--Any matter arising under this chapter or Chapter 249 of this title (relating to Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases) that results in a final order or finding issued by the Texas Education Agency staff, the State Office of Administrative Hearings, or the State Board for Educator Certification relating to the legal rights, duties, privileges, and status of a party's educator certificate.

(7) Educator--A person who is required to hold a certificate issued under the Texas Education Code, Chapter 21, Subchapter B.

(8) Endanger--Exposure of a student or minor to unjustified risk of injury or to injury that jeopardizes the physical health or safety of the student or minor without regard to whether there has been an actual injury to the student or minor.

(9) Good moral character--The virtues of a person as evidenced by patterns of personal, academic, and occupational behaviors that, in the judgment of the State Board for Educator Certification, indicate honesty, accountability, trustworthiness, reliability, and integrity. Lack of good moral character may be evidenced by the commission of crimes relating directly to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession as described in §249.16(b) of this title (relating to Eligibility of Persons with Criminal History for a Certificate under Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 53, and Texas Education Code, Chapter 21), or by the commission of acts involving moral turpitude, but conduct that evidences a lack of good moral character is not necessarily limited to such crimes or acts.

(10) Intentionally--An educator acts intentionally, or with intent, with respect to the nature of his or her conduct or to a result of his or her conduct when it is his or her conscious objective or desire to engage in the conduct or cause the result.

(11) Knowingly--An educator acts knowingly, or with knowledge, with respect to the nature of his or her conduct or to circumstances surrounding his or her conduct when he or she is aware of the nature of the conduct or that the circumstances exist. A person acts knowingly, or with knowledge, with respect to a result of his or her conduct when he or she is aware that the conduct is reasonably certain to cause the result.

(12) Minor--A person under 18 years of age.

(13) Moral turpitude--Improper conduct, including, but not limited to, the following: dishonesty; fraud; deceit; theft; misrepresentation; deliberate violence; base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or to gratify the sexual desire of the actor; drug or alcohol related offenses as described in §249.16(b) of this title (relating to Eligibility of Persons with Criminal History for a Certificate under Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 53, and Texas Education Code, Chapter 21); or acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code, §261.001.

(14) Neglect--The placing or leaving of a student or minor in a situation where the student or minor would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm.

(15) Recklessly--An educator acts recklessly, or is reckless, with respect to circumstances surrounding his or her conduct or the results of his or her conduct when he or she is aware of but consciously disregards a substantial and unjustifiable risk that the circumstances exist or the result will occur.

(16) Sanction--A disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification, including a restriction, reprimand, suspension, revocation of a certificate, or a surrender in lieu of disciplinary action.

(17) State Board for Educator Certification--The State Board for Educator Certification acting through its voting members in a decision-making capacity.

(18) State Board for Educator Certification member(s)--One or more of the members of the State Board for Educator Certification, appointed and qualified under the Texas Education Code, §21.033.

(19) Student--A person enrolled in a primary or secondary school, whether public, private, or charter, regardless of the person's age, or a person 18 years of age or younger who is eligible to be enrolled in a primary or secondary school, whether public, private, or charter.

(20) Texas Education Agency staff--Staff of the Texas Education Agency assigned by the commissioner of education to perform the State Board for Educator Certification's administrative functions and services.

(21) Worthy to instruct or to supervise the youth of this state--Presence of those moral, mental, and psychological qualities that are required to enable an educator to render the service essential to the accomplishment of the goals and mission of the State Board for Educator Certification policy and this chapter.

Source Note: The provisions of this §247.1 adopted to be effective March 1, 1998, 23 TexReg 1022; amended to be effective December 26, 2010, 35 TexReg 11242; amended to be effective December 19, 2011, 36 TexReg 8530; amended to be effective December 27, 2016, 41 TexReg 10329

(a) Enforceable Standards.

(1) Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices and Performance.

(A) Standard 1.1. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.

(B) Standard 1.2. The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

(C) Standard 1.3. The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

(D) Standard 1.4. The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

(E) Standard 1.5. The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

(F) Standard 1.6. The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

(G) Standard 1.7. The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.

(H) Standard 1.8. The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.

(I) Standard 1.9. The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.

(J) Standard 1.10. The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.

(K) Standard 1.11. The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.

(L) Standard 1.12. The educator shall refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.

(M) Standard 1.13. The educator shall not be under the influence of alcohol or consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

(N) Standard 1.14. The educator shall not assist another educator, school employee, contractor, or agent in obtaining a new job as an educator or in a school, apart from the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files, if the educator knows or has probable cause to believe that such person engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law.
Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues.

(A) Standard 2.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

(B) Standard 2.2. The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

(C) Standard 2.3. The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

(D) Standard 2.4. The educator shall not interfere with a colleague’s exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

(E) Standard 2.5. The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.

(F) Standard 2.6. The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

(G) Standard 2.7. The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

Ethical Conduct Toward Students.

(A) Standard 3.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

(B) Standard 3.2. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

(C) Standard 3.3. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

(D) Standard 3.4. The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

(E) Standard 3.5. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.

(F) Standard 3.6. The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

(G) Standard 3.7. The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

(H) Standard 3.8. The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.
(l) Standard 3.9. The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

(i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;

(ii) the subject matter of the communication;

(iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;

(iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;

(v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and

(vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Source Note: The provisions of this §247.2 adopted to be effective March 1, 1998, 23 TexReg 1022; amended to be effective August 22, 2002, 27 TexReg 7530; amended to be effective December 26, 2010, 35 TexReg 11242; amended to be effective December 27, 2016, 41 TexReg 10329