BOTEPCO

TEACHER CODE OF ETHICS

BUILDING INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED TEACHING PROFESSIONALS

ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

BOTEPCO	–	Botswana Teaching Professionals Council
DCEC	–	Directorate of Corruption and Economic Crime
EFA	–	Education for All
ICoEE	–	The International Code of Ethics for Educators
IIEP	–	International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	–	International Labour Organisation
RC	–	Reference Committee
TWG	–	Technical Working Group
UNESCO	–	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

DEFINITIONS

Appeals Committee	Has the same meaning assigned to it under the BOTEPCO Act.
Conduct	Refers to the expected ethical behaviour of a Teacher in line with the Code.
Confidential Information	Any non-public, sensitive, or private information concerning a Learner, colleague, or institution obtained in the course of professional duties and which must not be disclosed without lawful authority or consent.
Constitution	Shall mean the Constitution of Botswana, CAP 01:01.
Continuous Professional Development	Planned learning experiences and activities designed to enhance a Teacher's knowledge, skills, and competence, including training, workshops, and educational research.
Council	Has the same meaning assigned to it under the BOTEPCO Act.
Cyberbullying	Any form of harassment, abuse, or intimidation using electronic communication platforms, including social media, emails, or messaging services.
Children's Act	Shall mean the Botswana Children's Act, CAP 28:04.
Disciplinary Committee	Has the same meaning assigned to it under the BOTEPCO Act.
Educational Institution	Shall mean a public and private establishment that offers formal learning and instructions to individuals. This includes schools and tutoring centres that focus on academic or skill-based education.
Employer	Has the same meanings assigned to it under the Employment Act & Public Service Act.
Ethical Values	The core principles that guide Teachers' Conduct, including but not limited to integrity, respect, accountability, fairness, confidentiality, and Professionalism.
Learner -	Any individual, typically a child or youth, who receives instruction from a Teacher in a recognized Educational Institution, whether public or private.
Licensing -	The formal process by which the Council authorizes a qualified Teacher to practice the profession within Botswana, upon meeting all registration and ethical compliance requirements.

Misconduct - Any behaviour, act, or omission by a Teacher that violates the provisions of this Code, including unprofessional, unethical, illegal, or negligent Conduct in a professional or personal capacity that affects the integrity of the teaching profession.

Parent/Guardian - A biological or legal parent, or any adult who has lawful custody or responsibility for the welfare and education of a Learner.

Pornographic Content - Any material that visually or textually depicts sexual activity, nudity, or obscene acts, especially when involving or targeted toward Learners or the school environments.

Professionalism - The Conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize a Teacher as competent, respectful, accountable, and committed to Continuous Professional Development and ethical practice.

Register - An official list maintained by the Council containing the names and details of all registered and licensed Teachers in Botswana.

School Leadership - The administrative and academic leader of an Educational Institution who is responsible for managing staff, Learners, resources, and compliance with educational policies and ethical standards.

Teacher - Has the same meaning assigned to it under the BOTEPCO Act.

Teaching License Has the same meaning assigned to it under the BOTEPCO Act.

The Code Refers to this Teacher Code of Ethics, as established and maintained by the Botswana Teaching Professional Council, which outlines the expected ethical conduct and professional responsibilities of all registered Teachers.

Valuable Considerations Has the same meaning assigned to it under the DCEC Act.

INTRODUCTION TO TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

Teachers registered with the Botswana Teaching Professionals Council recognize the noble calling of their profession to educate and train the learners of the nation, understanding that their attitude, dedication, self-discipline, ideals, training, and conduct directly shape the quality of education. They commit to upholding professionalism, adhere to the highest ethical standards, and execute their professional duties in a manner that seeks to maintain the dignity and status of the teaching profession. Furthermore, they pledge to carry out their duties in line with the ideals of the profession as expressed in this Code.

1. CORE ETHICAL VALUES

To maintain the honour and dignity of the profession, and promote educational quality, Teachers should observe the below core Ethical Values and adopt appropriate professional Conduct.

1.1 Integrity

1.1.1 Uphold honesty, transparency, and ethical behaviour in all professional dealings.

1.1.2 Avoid conflicts of interest and maintain trust with students, colleagues, and the public.

1.2 Respect

1.2.1 Treat all Learners, parents, and colleagues with dignity and fairness.

1.2.2 Value cultural diversity, individual differences, and inclusive education.

1.3 Accountability

1.3.1 Be accountable for one's teaching practices and Continuous Professional Development.

1.3.2 Fulfilling professional duties diligently and reliably.

1.4 Fairness

1.4.1 Treating all Learners, parents, and colleagues, without favouritism or discrimination.

1.4.2 Ensuring assessments and disciplinary actions are just and unbiased.

1.5 Confidentiality

1.5.1 Safeguard the privacy of student or colleague records and personal information.

1.5.2 Avoid disclosing sensitive information without consent or legal obligation.

1.6 Professionalism

1.6.1 Maintaining high standards of Conduct, appearance, and communication.

1.6.2 Engaging in Continuous Professional Development.

1.7 Excellence

1.7.1 Commitment to consistently delivering high-quality results and striving for continuous improvement

TEACHER INTERACTIONS & ETHICAL CONDUCT

Teachers' ethical conduct and trust in the educational system are crucial for maintaining public confidence and ensuring a quality education system.

2. TEACHER AND THE LEARNER

2.1 The Teacher shall:

2.1.1 Recognise Learners as partners in education;

2.1.2 Acknowledge the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each Learner, guiding and encouraging each to realise his or her potentialities;

2.1.3 Respect the dignity, beliefs and rights of Learners and in particular children, which includes child friendly environment;

2.1.4 Strive to enable Learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution of Botswana and Children's Act;

2.1.5 Use appropriate language and behave professionally in his or her interaction with Learners to earn respect from the Learners;

2.1.6 As far as practicable, protect a Learner from conditions, that distract learning, such as noise and disruptions, inappropriate use of mobile devices;

2.1.7 Avoid committing or permitting any form of child abuse such as physical, psychological or verbal;

2.1.8 Avoid committing or permitting any form of humiliation, bullying and harassment;

2.1.9 Exercise authority with compassion;

2.1.10 Protect a Learner from conditions detrimental to their health such as poor ventilation or sanitation, and ignoring their medical needs;

2.1.11 Not discriminate against a Learner based on gender, race, religion, tribe, colour, physical characteristic, disability, socioeconomic status, place of origin or age;

2.1.12 Not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law;

2.1.13 Not gift or accept gifts, favours or any form of payments, from or to a Learner or parent whichcould be reasonably perceived as being used to influence the Teacher's professional decisions or actions;

2.1.14 Not use professional relationships with students for private advantage;

2.1.15 During his or her duties, not engage in an amorous relationship with a Learner under their mentorship, authority, control or care;

2.1.16 Refrain from engaging in communications with any Learner beyond the boundaries of a professional relationship without a valid reason, including via written / electronic / online means (including social media);

2.1.17 Refrain from engaging in any form of sexual Misconduct which includes behaviour, physical contact,speech or other communication of a sexual nature, inappropriate touching and voyeurism;

2.1.18 Refrain from producing, publishing or possessing Pornographic Content or obscene material relating to Learners and or exposing Learners to pornographic material;

2.1.19 Refrain from courting or socialising with Learners (including online and via social media) outside a professional context;

2.1.20 Refrain from causing a Learner to engage in illicit drug consumption and trafficking, human trafficking or other illegal activities in accordance with local statutory law; and

2.1.21 Refrain from imposing own political, religious beliefs, cultural or other ideologies that may be harmful to a Learner.

3. TEACHER AND THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

3.1 The Teacher shall:

3.1.1 Recognise Parents/Guardians as partners in education, and promote a harmonious relationship with them;

3.1.2 Refrain from offering/accepting/soliciting a valuable consideration in any form to Parents/Guardians;

3.1.3 Do what is practically possible to keep Parents/Guardians adequately and timeously informed about the well-being and progress of the Learner;

3.1.4 Provide a Parent/Guardian with relevant information concerning activities of an Educational Institution, progress and or challenges of a Learner when requested or required to do so by a Parent/Guardian; and

3.1.5 Consider the Parents/Guardians' perspective when making decisions which have an impact on the education or wellbeing of a Learner.

4. TEACHER AND THE COMMUNITY

4.1 The Teacher shall:

4.1.1 Recognise that an Educational Institution serves the community, and therefore acknowledges that there will be differing customs and beliefs in the community;

4.1.2 Conduct him/herself in a manner that does not show disrespect to the values, customs and norms;

4.1.3 Act as a role model in the community;

4.1.4 In upholding the dignity of the profession, may actively participate in the development of the community; and

4.1.5 Keep the community informed of and appropriately involved in decisions about educational programs and activities.

5. TEACHER COLLEGIALITY

5.1 The Teacher shall:

5.1.1 Refrain from any form of abuse such as physical, verbal, psychological, emotional;

5.1.2 Use appropriate forums for constructive debate on professional matters;

5.1.3 Use proper professional procedures in place to address issues of professional incompetence or misbehaviour;

5.1.4 Treat colleagues with courtesy and respect, valuing their input, sharing expertise and knowledge in collaborative contexts;

5.1.5 Not promote any form of unfair discrimination against colleagues;

5.1.6 Not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law;

5.1.7 Refrain from sending unsolicited sexual messages and/or pornographic material to colleagues;

5.1.8 Refrain from sexual harassment (physical or otherwise) of his or her colleagues; and

5.1.9 Refrain from undermining the status and authority of his or her colleagues, to ensure the smooth running of the Educational Institution.

6. TEACHER AND THE PROFESSION

6.1 The Teacher shall;

6.1.1 Recognise the Employer as a partner in education;

6.1.2 Acknowledge that the exercising of his or her professional duties occurs within a context requiring co-operation with and support of colleagues;

6.1.3 Promote the ongoing development of teaching as a profession;

6.1.4 Commit to Continuous Professional Development;

6.1.5 Act in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession inside and outside of school time;

6.1.6 Behave in a way that enhances the dignity and status of the teaching profession and that does not bring the profession into disrepute;

6.1.7 Dress in a manner consistent with the dignity and honour of the teaching profession;

6.1.8 Not carry out or transact any private business within or outside the school premises while on official duty;

6.1.9 Gain and maintain public trust and confidence by delivering quality education to all the Learners;

6.1.10 Be knowledgeable about his/her legal and administrative rights and his/her responsibilities towards the management;

6.1.11 Not demand/accept/solicit for a Valuable Consideration from the Learners or the public in relation to the discharge of his or her duty;

6.1.12 Not engage in activities which may adversely affect the quality of the Teacher's professional service;

6.1.13 Not involve himself or herself in examination maladministration or malpractices;

6.1.14 Not misrepresent official policies of the school or educational organizations;

6.1.15 Not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage;
6.1.16 Refrain from any contravention of the statutes and regulations of the Republic of Botswana, relevant to the provisions of this Code;
6.1.17 Refrain from carrying and/or keeping dangerous weapons in the school premises;
6.1.18 Refrain from engaging in malicious communication and Cyberbullying on the social media;
6.1.19 Refrain from indulging and/or being in possession of intoxicating, illegal, and/or unauthorised substances including alcohol and drugs within the school premises and/or whilst on duty. This excludes the Teacher's quarters;
6.1.20 Refrain from unfair discrimination based on race, tribe, place of origin, national extraction, social origin, marital status, political opinions, sex, colour, creed or health status; and
6.1.21 Strive to enhance the teaching profession attractiveness and respectability by demonstrating and maintaining high ethical standards.

7. TEACHER AND THE EMPLOYER

7.1 The Teacher shall:
7.1.1 Acknowledge that certain responsibilities and authorities are vested in the Employer through legislation;
7.1.2 Carry out lawful instructions from management personnel and also have the right to seek clarification through clearly determined procedure and channel;
7.1.3 Fulfil his or her contractual obligations to the best of his or her ability to the Employer until released by mutual consent or according to law; and
7.1.4 Refrain from discussing or disclosing Confidential Information to unauthorised persons which he or she has obtained in the course of his or her duties as a Teacher.

8. TEACHER AND THE COUNCIL

8.1 The Teacher shall;
8.1.1 Familiarise him/herself with the provisions of the Code;
8.1.2 Comply with the provisions of this Code;
8.1.3 Inform the Council and/or relevant authorities of alleged or potential breaches of the Code within his/her knowledge;
8.1.4 Co-operate with the Council as and when required;
8.1.5 Ensure that the Council is duly informed of her/his intention to be removed from the Register as per BOTEPCO Act; and
8.1.6 Accept and comply with the procedures and requirements of the Council, including but not limited to the Registration & Licensing Procedures, the Disciplinary Procedures of the Council and the payment of compulsory fees.

9. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

The school head or principal is the primary leader in fostering a culture of integrity, respect, accountability, fairness, confidentiality, and professionalism within the school.

9.1 The School Leadership shall;

9.1.1 Be bound by the Code and shall set a good example in the strict observance of all provisions of the Code.

9.1.2 Enforce the observance of the Code by all Teachers under him or her in accordance with the Laws, regulations and provisions relating to the Education Service and shall promptly deal with all breaches of the Code.

9.1.3 Enroll Learners into the Educational Institution without discrimination and within the regulations and provisions of the laws in force in Botswana;

9.1.4 Accept that he or she has a professional obligation towards the education and induction into the profession of new members of the teaching profession;

9.1.5 Collect and receive relevant Educational Institution dues, gifts, donations and endowments according to established procedures;

9.1.6 Account for all the money and assets collected and received on behalf of the Educational Institution;

9.1.7 Implement policies issued from time to time by the relevant authorities;

9.1.8 Keep all Educational Institution records in his or her custody in safe condition and ensure all that such records contain correct and updated information;

9.1.9 Not connive with members of staff or any other person to commit an offence, or any act that will bring the profession into disrepute within or outside the Educational Institution;

9.1.10 Not conceal any act of Misconduct committed by a member of his or her staff or by any Learner of the school, whether committed within or outside the Educational Institution;

9.1.11 Not receive/accept/solicit a Valuable Consideration in relation to the discharge of his or her duties;

9.1.12 Report any act of Misconduct to the Council on all matters concerning Learners and Teachers without fear, favour, bias or discrimination;

9.1.13 Not carry out or transact any private business within or outside the school premises while on official duty;

9.1.14 Use all avenues open to him or her to report Code breaches to the appropriate authorities for action;

9.1.15 Ensure that Learners and staff have access to his/her office and are free to raise concerns or seek resolution for any grievances.

10. ENFORCEMENT OF THE CODE

10.1 A Teacher who contravenes or fails to comply with any provision of this Code commits a Misconduct and must be dealt with in terms of this Code and the BOTEPCO Act.

10.2 A Teacher charged with a criminal offence in a court of law, whether the matter is still pending, or he or she is found guilty or not guilty of such offence, may be charged with Misconduct, if the offence constitutes a Misconduct in terms of or under this Code and the BOTEPCO Act.

10.3 A Teacher who is aggrieved or dissatisfied with the decision of the Disciplinary Committee may appeal the decision to the Appeals Committee within 14 days.

10.4 Any person who reasonably believes/suspects that a Teacher has contravened a provision of this Code and the BOTEPCO Act, may lodge a complaint with the Council.

10.5 A complaint lodged with the Council shall be dealt with in accordance with this Code and the BOTEPCO Act.

10.6 All matters dealt with by the Council shall be kept confidential and shall not be divulged to unauthorized persons.

10.7 Teachers who breach the Code shall be removed from the Register and consequently have their Teaching License Cancelled, and the Employer shall be notified accordingly.

11. LODGING A COMPLAINT/BREACH

When a Teacher is suspected of committing a breach, the Council must be contacted immediately, and any criminal matters will be directed to the appropriate authorities.

11.1 How To Lodge a Complaint/Breach

The complaint should preferably be through:

11.1.1 Writing,

11.1.2 Ethics hotline (includes anonymous tip-offs),
Telephone,

11.1.4 Email,

11.1.5 Walk-ins,

11.1.6 other available means

The reporter should clearly disclose the alleged breach of the Code. All reported breaches or complaints will be handled by the Investigations Unit.

11.2 Investigations

To establish a fair, structured, transparent and effective process for conducting investigations into allegations and complaints of Teacher Misconduct.

The Investigations office shall;

11.2.1 Ensure that alleged breaches of the Code are investigated;

11.2.2 In investigating any alleged breach of the Code;

- **i.** interview complainants and other possible witnesses;
- **ii.** interview the Teacher who is alleged to have breached the Code;
- **iii.** gather evidence relevant to the alleged breach;

11.2.3 Keep a record of the investigations; and

11.2.4 Refer the matter for a disciplinary hearing, if the investigations are satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of a breach of the Code by a Teacher.

11.3 Disciplinary Procedures

To establish a structured transparent, independent, impartial and neutral disciplinary process.

The Disciplinary Committee shall:

11.3.1 Inform the Teacher of the nature of allegations and invite him/her for hearing of the case in writing, 21 (twenty-one) days before the hearing;

11.3.2 In conducting the disciplinary proceedings consider all the evidence before it including oral evidence; and

11.3.3 Within 28 (twenty-eight) days from the date of hearing inform the Teacher of its decision and reasons there of.

11.4 Appeal Against the Decision of the Disciplinary Committee

11.4.1 Any person aggrieved by the decision of the Disciplinary Committee may, within 14 (fourteen) days from the date of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee, appeal to the Appeals Committee, by delivering the notice of Appeal.

11.4.2 The Appeals committee shall then consider the Appeal within 30 (thirty) days from the date of delivery of the Notice of Appeal.

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