

## **Policy Code: 5100 Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct**

All school system employees hold positions of public trust; they are responsible for the education of students and also serve as examples and role models to students. Each employee is responsible for both the integrity and the consequences of his or her own actions. The highest standards of honesty, integrity, and fairness must be exhibited by each employee when engaging in any activity concerning the school system, particularly in relationships with vendors, suppliers, students, parents, the public, and other employees. Employee conduct should be such as to protect both the person's integrity and/or reputation and that of the school system. An unswerving commitment to honorable behavior by each and every employee is expected. Integrity can accommodate the inadvertent error and the honest difference of opinion; it cannot accommodate deceit or subordination of principle.

Employees shall perform their jobs in a competent and ethical manner without violating either the public trust or applicable law, policies, and regulations. Instructional staff and other school system employees will not utilize methods or materials that would create division or promote animosity among students, staff and the community. Staff shall not teach social theories, outside of NC Standards, of any kind to students unless approved by the North Carolina State Board of Education and legislated by the North Carolina General Assembly. In addition to other policies, regulations, and approved practices that have been established covering specific areas of activity (such as purchasing), the absence of a law, policy, or regulation covering a particular situation does not relieve an employee from the responsibility to exercise the highest ethical standards at all times.

Employees shall notify the Head of Human Resources or his/her designee immediately if they are charged with or convicted of a criminal offense (including entering a plea of guilty or no contest) except for minor traffic violations.

To ensure consistency, balance, neutrality and fairness by all employees when discussing various political and social issues with students the following guidance is being provided. The overall goal shall be social responsibility and empathy, human relations, compliance with laws, prosperity and the pursuit of happiness.

### **A. Social Responsibility and Empathy**

Students should be exposed to **Social Responsibility**, the ethical theory that students are encouraged to fulfill their civic duty, and their actions should benefit society as a whole, creating a balance between growth and the welfare of society. **Social Responsibility** encourages everyone to contribute and work together for

the benefit of society. **Social Responsibility** shall be taught in conjunction in discussion of political concepts.

All discussions regarding political and social issues shall be conducted with **Empathy and Kindness**. No person should be judged, subjected to stereotypes regardless of negative or positive, or marginalized based on race, gender, religion, preference, ethnicity, immigration status, socioeconomic standing, ability, or any other identity group. No person should be limited by the assumptions of race, gender, religion, creed, ethnicity, preference, immigration status or identity group regarding the individual's behavior and future success.

No employee or student shall be forced to have compelled speech or acceptance of ideas that are contrary to their beliefs.

## **B. Human Relations**

A prerequisite to discussing any political or social theories with students shall be a review of these major themes of Human Relations:

- Conflict Resolution
- Self-Awareness
- Motivation
- Trust
- Communication

When discussing conflict of a political, social, or other nature; dialogue should occur that works towards a peaceful resolution. An understanding, preferably a mastery, of these human relations concepts are beneficial in fostering productive and competent dialogue and solutions.

Racism causes damage to individuals and the community. When racism is present, it creates a lack of trust and respect. No student or staff member shall be subjected to the notion that racism is a permanent component of American life. No unequal value shall be placed on any race, gender, religion, ethnicity, social class, or any other identity group.

## **C. Compliance with Laws**

All activities should be in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws. In addition, students will be encouraged to comply with all laws, ordinances and regulations set forth by the federal, state, and local government. Teachers will instruct and educate students about legal policies and avenues of actions.

As defined in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study Johnston County Schools shall foster a working knowledge of local government. Johnston County Schools shall place an emphasis on the necessity of these services in order for society to function in a proper and productive manner.

Students should be encouraged to participate in government sponsored elections with no bias being given to any party or candidates. (Policy 2035)

Johnston County School employees shall not encourage or promote any specific ideology, legislation or candidate for an elected office while performing official duties.

A goal of this policy is to foster positive relationships between our students and the local government entities who provide services to their community. Any group who encourages students to act outside of the law, places this relationship in peril, and is not productive to the goal of **Social Responsibility**.

#### **D. Cycle of Poverty**

JCPS will make efforts to formally train staff on the danger and impact of the **Cycle of Poverty**, the lack of resources of children who are born into a family whose household income is below the poverty level, and often are unable to break the poverty cycle.

#### **E. Balance & Fairness**

When discussing a controversial topic, which may arise out of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, the staff member shall remain neutral and present the information without bias. These topics must include multiple and varied viewpoints, in an effort to stimulate thought, without persuasion or outside pressure, among students. (Policy 5170, 2205)

All people deserve full credit and recognition for their struggles and accomplishments throughout United States history. The United States foundational documents shall not be undermined. No employee of Johnston County Schools will make any attempt to discredit the efforts made by all people using foundational documents for reform.

No fictional accounts or narratives shall be used to invalidate actual objective historical events. All people who contributed to American Society will be recognized and presented as reformists, innovators and heroes to our culture.

Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Legal References: [G.S. 14-234](#), [-234.1](#), [-47\(18\)](#), [-308](#)

Adopted: November 9, 1999, Amended: August 14, 2018

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