

# Professional Obligations

For teachers, the term professionalism <sup>Ⓢ</sup> refers to using the fairest, most considerate, and most ethical ways of fulfilling the duties of the teaching position. Where classroom management is concerned, your primary professional obligation is to establish and maintain a safe and productive learning environment for your students. That means keeping the environment physically and emotionally safe, keeping students on task, fostering positive relationships among members of the class, and minimizing behavior that interferes with your teaching or your students' learning....

<b>Professional and Ethical Behavior:</b>	You must always conduct yourself ethically, treating your students and colleagues fairly, honestly, compassionately, and supportively. You must be honest with them, but at the same time avoid, when possible, saying or doing things that hurt their feelings or stifle their desire to learn or cooperate.
<b>Effort:</b>	You must give your genuine best effort to the profession. Your obligation is to do all you reasonably can to help students benefit from their educational experience and find satisfaction in doing so. You should give that same effort to relations with administrators, colleagues, and students' caregivers.
<b>Teaching:</b>	You must teach in a manner that is conducive to success for every one of your students. You will want to give careful attention to selecting appropriate subject matter, providing interesting and worthwhile learning activities, relating effectively and helpfully with students, adjusting instruction to students' abilities and personalities, and insisting on considerate, humane treatment by and for everyone in the class.

**Helpfulness:**

Always do what you can to help students, collectively and individually. Help them succeed academically. Help them relate well with others. Help them find satisfaction in school and learning. As Haim Ginott (1971) said so many years ago, always ask yourself what you can do, at a given moment, to be most helpful to your students. He referred to continual helpfulness as “teachers’ hidden asset.”

**Respect:**

Cultivate and demonstrate genuine respect for your students. Treat all of them as your social equals, worthy of your time and attention. Speak with each of them in a kindly manner as often as you can. Learn their names quickly and make an effort to remember significant things about them. Show genuine approval for effort and work done well (but skip insincere or undeserved praise). Spread your attention around evenly. Avoid causing students to lose face or to feel that you’ve taken away their dignity. As best you can, always treat your students as you would like to be treated in similar circumstances.

**Cooperation:**

Help your students understand that accepting each other and working together benefits everyone in the class. Emphasize that you have a plan that will help them learn and enjoy themselves. Reassure them you will be considerate of their desires and feelings. Sincerely invite them to cooperate with you and each other, and give them some responsibility in making the class enjoyable and productive. Make sure they feel part of the process.

**Communication:**

Students need to know clearly what is expected of them. Be helpful and encouraging, and avoid preaching or moralizing. Avoid grilling students about improper behavior or otherwise putting them on the defensive. When they speak, listen attentively and try to understand where they're coming from. When you reply to them, avoid criticizing their points of view. Frame your comments so that students recognize your intent to help them be successful in school.

**Charisma:**

Charisma is a quality of attractiveness that makes others want to be in your presence and interact with you. You acquire charisma by making yourself personally interesting and by being upbeat and pleasant, using humor appropriately. You can let your students see your charismatic side by occasionally sharing information about your interests, experiences, and talents. Charismatic people generally avoid sarcasm; even when sarcasm may be intended to be humorous, it is easily misinterpreted and can be hurtful. Let students see your most positive qualities. Think about what you would want *your* teacher to be like, and then do those things. (Unless those things mean letting you watch TV all the time and never having to do any work—don't do that, please.)

Charles, C. M., & Cole, K. M. (2019). *Building Classroom Management: Methods and Models*. Pearson.