Introduction

Welcome to *Ethics & Safety in Education: Guidelines for Teachers & Administrators*, an interactive computer-based instruction course, which is a prevention course developed to help educators reduce and eliminate violations of ethics and professional conduct codes. The course is intended to keep ethical teachers ethical and to be a part of a larger school district plan to protect the district’s teachers, staff, and students.

The course’s central premise is that the vast majority of ethics and boundary violations occurring in schools today are being committed by competent and ethical educators who, for reasons to be discussed, are making very poor decisions during susceptible periods in their careers. All professionals have the potential to commit an ethics/boundary violation. Understanding and addressing one’s violation potential before a violation occurs is essential in protecting students, careers, and the teaching profession’s integrity. It is easier to anticipate and not commit a violation than to correct one after the fact.

Course Materials

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<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th><em>Ethics &amp; Safety in Education: Guidelines for Teachers &amp; Administrators</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author:</td>
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<td>Professional Boundaries, Inc. (PBI) Copyright © 2011 PBI.</td>
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Dr. Shyers received his B.A. from David Lipscomb University, an M.A.T. from Stetson University, an M.Ed from the University of Central Florida, and a Ph.D. from the University of Florida, Gainsville. He is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and an Approved Clinical Supervisor. The American Mental Health Counselors Association named him Counselor of the Year in 1994-95. Today Dr. Shyers conducts a variety of workshops, seminars and training for licensed professionals, churches and foster care workers throughout the United States. He is an adjunct professor at the University of Central Florida, the Reformed Theological Seminary, Palm Beach Atlantic University, Orlando Campus and at Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA. He has been an Individual, Marriage and Family Christian counselor for over 40 years and has been in private practice as a psychotherapist in Mount Dora, Florida since 1980.
Academic Integrity Statement
The structure and format of most distance-learning courses presume a high level of personal and academic integrity in completion and submission of coursework. Individuals enrolled in a distance-learning course are expected to adhere to the following standards of academic conduct.

Academic Work
Academic work submitted by the individual (such as papers, assignments, reports, tests) shall be the student’s own work or appropriately attributed, in part or in whole, to its correct source. Submission of commercially prepared (or group prepared) materials as if they are one’s own work is unacceptable.

Aiding Honesty in Others
The individual will encourage honesty in others by refraining from providing materials or information to another person with knowledge that these materials or information will be used improperly.

Violations of these academic standards will result in the assignment of a failing grade and subsequent loss of credit for the course.

Level of Application
This course is designed to be an informational course with application to education and education-related settings. This is an ethics and boundary violation prevention course and is intended for teachers and administrators involved with pre-kindergarten through higher education students and settings. The self-examinations and ensuing results are meant for personal use and awareness purposes. These results are not intended to be used as concrete predictors of impending ethics violations. The information and exams in this course should be used to increase participants’ awareness of ethical issues in education while making them aware of personal issues, thoughts, beliefs, or patterns that may increase the chance of being involved in an ethics violation. Professionals who have already been disciplined for an ethics or boundary violation, who have been accused of a violation, and/or who are awaiting disciplinary action should consider taking the rehabilitative course entitled: Professional Boundaries, Ethics, and Professionalism in Education - A Program for Teachers Facing Administrative and Disciplinary Action.

Course Objectives
Chapter One: Participants shall:
1. Know the definition of professionalism, ethics, and what they mean for the teaching profession.
2. Through the completion of the pre-test, identify and explain the possible moral or ethical dilemmas in each vignette.
3. Describe and be able to discuss the Rise of the Professions and the relationship to secular Western society professions such as Education.
4. Identify the nine principles found in most Codes of Ethics.
5. Seek out and read their respective profession’s Code of Ethics and/or State Code of Professional Conduct.
6. Describe the definitions, the distinctions, and the relationship of Professional Ethics, Law, and Professional Boundaries.
7. Know the distinction and interconnection of teaching, being a professional, professional boundaries, and the Power Differential

Chapter Two: Participants shall:
1. Know the difference between Ethical Drifts, Crossings, and Violations.
2. Describe the impact of a colleague’s transgression on other members of the profession.
3. Know and discuss what are considered Administrative Violations.
4. Know and discuss what are considered non-sexual crossings and violations.
5. Explain the dynamics and implications of teachers’ committing sexual misconduct.
6. Be able to state and apply the three Laws of Professional Boundaries.
Chapter Three: Participants shall:
1. Describe what a Violation Potential is and what it means.
2. Understand and discuss the Boundary/Ethics Formula.
3. Be able to define, identify, and discuss Risk Factors.
4. Be able to define, identify, and discuss Vulnerabilities.
5. Be able to define, identify, and discuss Accountabilities.
6. Be able to define and discuss resistance and resistance to resistance.
7. Be able to define, identify, and discuss Catalysts.
8. Be able to explain and discuss Cognitive Distortion, Cold & Hot Ethics, and the Slippery Slope.

Chapter Four: Participants shall:
1. Describe the purpose of a Stratified Ethics Protection Plan (SEPP).
2. Identify the three tiers of a Stratified Ethics Protection Plan.
3. Describe the components essential in an effective Stratified Ethics Protection Plan.
4. Develop their own three-tiered SEPP.

Course Description
“Ethics & Safety in Education: Guidelines for Teachers & Administrators” was developed because teachers are increasingly being reported and charged with sexual misconduct and exploitation of their students. This has become a national issue. School administrators and state leaders are seeking answers. In addition, lawmakers are demanding action and contemplating a variety of legislative responses. This situation may shift oversight and discipline outside the profession. Education leaders and administrators are faced with figuring out how to respond effectively. All violations are disturbing, but teacher sexual abuse is most harmful.

The majority of violations are being committed by generally ethical and competent teachers, who, for reasons that will be addressed in this course, are making extremely poor decisions while demonstrating poor judgment and behavior during susceptible periods in their careers. It is incumbent upon the leaders, administrators, and teachers in our school districts to recognize the causal relationship of subtle factors and circumstances that are the antecedents of career-ending events. This acknowledgement is vital so that early intervention can occur before evolving problems escalate into violations. Equally important is the recognition that school districts, as well as individual schools, may carry organizational vulnerabilities that can unintentionally create a climate of collusion and enablement for ethical crossings and violations to occur. Changes are needed at all levels.

This course will present a new way of thinking about professional ethics and professional boundaries within the teaching profession. We will look at the reasons that violations of ethics and boundaries sometimes occur. Ethical violations that transpire in both administrative and relationship contexts will be addressed. This course will help you look at ways of preventing such violations and help you understand how you as a teacher can intervene before violations take place. These preventative responses are critical to your ability to protect your students, your profession, and your career.

By taking this course, you will become part of a solution. The children being taught need and deserve to feel safe in order to prosper as students. Likewise, parents need the assurance that the school environment to which they send their children is secure. The community demands to know that their teachers are professional, ethical, and above reproach. Finally, as a teacher, you must avoid even the appearance of a violation to preserve the integrity of the profession.

This course is designed to keep ethical teachers ethical by reducing and managing a teacher’s violation potential. It is intended to be a part of a larger school district plan to protect the district’s teachers, staff, and students.

Student Expectations
As a student you will be expected to:
- Complete all information chapters covering Ethics & Safety in Education: Guidelines for Teachers & Administrators, showing a competent understanding of the material presented.
- Complete all examinations, showing a competent understanding of the material presented.
- Complete a review of any chapter on which your examination score was below 70%.
- Retake any chapter examination, after completing an information review, to increase that examination score to a minimum of 70% **(maximum of three attempts)**.
- Complete all course journal article and essay writing assignments with the minimum word count shown for each writing assignment.
- Complete a course evaluation form at the end of the course.

**Course Overview**

*Chapter One: Ethics – the Conscience of the Profession*

The first chapter contains information on the importance, origins, and intrinsic nature of ethics; the unique integration of ethical values with professionalism; the basic principles of ethical codes; the distinction between professional ethics and law; the relationship of ethics to professional boundaries; and the intertwining of teacher frame, professionalism, boundary clarity, and the concept of the power differential.

*Chapter Two: Understanding the Why of Ethical & Boundary Violations*

This chapter focuses on the definition and relationship between ethical drifts, crossings, and violations and on the internal psychic process that contributes to ethical and boundary violations. The spectrum of violations will be presented to include administrative as well as relationship violations and the especially egregious issue of sexual misconduct by teachers. This chapter will conclude with the three “laws” of professional boundaries: 1) Every professional has a “Violation Potential” defined by the Boundary/Ethics Formula; 2) When it comes to professional boundaries and ethics, perception is 9/10ths of the law; and 3) Protect yourself at all times.

*Chapter Three: Acknowledging Your Own Violation Potential*

The third chapter will help participants assess their own violation potential through the Boundary/Ethics Formula. This will be done through an acknowledgement and understanding of one’s own external risk factors, internal personal vulnerabilities, level of professional accountability, degree of resistance and deniability, and the identification of personal catalysts that can lead to the crossing of a boundary and possible violation.

*Chapter Four: Staying Out of Trouble: Developing a Plan*

Chapter four brings the three previous chapters together through the participants’ development of their own confidential Stratified Ethics Protection Plan (SEPP). The SEPP will assist educators in reducing their violation potential through the development of a protection plan for one’s school and district, one’s own professional role, and a protection plan addressing personal issues. This chapter will end with the participants’ printing out their own “My Boundary/Ethics Workbook” for reference and ongoing development.

**Examinations**

At the end of each course chapter, you will be expected to complete an examination designed to assess your knowledge. You may take these exams a total of three times. Your last score will save, not the highest score. After your third attempt, each examination will lock and not allow further access. The average from your exam scores will be printed on your certificate. However, this is not your final grade since your required writing assignments have not been reviewed. Exceptionally written or poorly written required writing assignments, or violation of the academic integrity policy in the course syllabus, will affect your grade. As this is a self-paced computerized instruction program, you may review course information as often as necessary. You will not be able to exit any examinations until you have answered all questions. If you try to exit the exam before you complete all questions, your information will be lost. You are expected to complete the entire exam in one sitting.

**Writing Assignments**

This course has two required writing components.

**To save your essays:**

When you select the question or article you wish to write on, simple text or text edit will automatically be launched. When you are finished, simply click SAVE.

**You must SAVE before you write another essay or move on to another part of the course.**
1. **Essay Requirement: Critical Thinking Questions**
   There is a **Critical Thinking Question** for each chapter. You will do research on the question and write a brief essay relating it to the course content (and your personal experiences when possible). To view the questions, click on REQUIRED ESSAY and choose the Critical Thinking Question that you would like to complete; this will bring up a screen where you may enter your essay. You must write a minimum of 500 words per essay.
   
   You must SAVE before you write another essay or move on to another part of the course.

2. **Essay Requirement: Journal Articles**
   This task requires you to write a review of three journal articles of your choice on a topic related to this course. You may choose your topic by entering the Key Words (click on the Key Words button) into a search engine of your choice (Google, Dogpile, Yahoo, etc.). Choose three relevant articles and write a 200-word review of each. You may also access the ERIC system and choose a related topic from a journal listed in that system. Or you can access www.scholar.google.com or www.findarticles.com. Write a critical summary of the information given in each article, explaining how the information relates to, supports, or refutes information given in this course. Conclude your paper with your thoughts and impressions. (200 words per journal article minimum, 400 words maximum.) Be sure to provide the journal name, volume, date, and any other critical information to allow the instructor to access and review that article.

   To write your essays, click on REQUIRED ESSAY and choose the Journal Article that you would like to complete; this will bring up a screen where you can write your review. When you are ready to stop, click SAVE. You may go back at any point to edit your essays. For more information on the features of this assignment, please consult the HELP menu.
   
   You must SAVE before you write another essay or move on to another part of the course.

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**Instructor Description**

*Ethics & Safety in Education: Guidelines for Teachers & Administrators* has been developed by Professional Boundaries, Inc. an education company founded in 2001 with the mission to safeguard professionals, professions, and the public that they serve. Initially developed for the heath care field, PBI now provides service to numerous professions as well as their regulatory agencies and licensing boards. The course authors are the PBI faculty.

**Contacting the Instructor**

You may contact the instructor by emailing Larry@larryeshyers.com or calling him at (509) 891-7219, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PST. Phone messages will be answered within 24 hours. Phone conferences will be limited to ten minutes per student, per day, given that this is a self-paced instructional program. Please do not contact the instructor about technical problems, course glitches or other issues that involve the operation of the course.

**Technical Questions**

If you have questions or problems related to the operation of this course, please try everything twice. If the problem persists please check our support pages for FAQs and known issues at www.virtualeduc.com and also the Help section of your course.

If you need personal assistance then email support@virtualeduc.com or call (509) 891-7219. When contacting technical support, please know your course version number (it is located at the bottom left side of the Welcome Screen) and your operating system, and be seated in front of the computer at the time of your call.

**Minimum Computer Requirements**

Please refer to VESi’s website: www.virtualeduc.com or contact VESi if you have further questions about the compatibility of your operating system.

Refer to the addendum regarding Grading Criteria, Course Completion Information, Items to be Submitted, and how to submit your completed information.
Bibliography


Course content is updated every three years. Due to this update timeline, some URL links may no longer be active or may have changed. Please type the title of the organization into the command line of any Internet browser search window and you will be able to find whether the URL link is still active or any new link to the corresponding organization's web home page.

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