

# #ABC Conduct

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Educators have a visible place in their communities. The choices they make, even when well-intended, can affect their job, family, schools, and profession. The Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Education Association and Ohio Federation of Teachers, supported by BASA, OASSA and OAESA offer this series of tip sheets on how to recognize situations that can get good educators in trouble. #ABCconduct tip sheets are designed to help educators identify and mitigate risks that occur in everyday situations. These tip sheets provide guidance for best practices and are not intended to be used in disciplinary actions.

Educators have a life outside of their teaching, coaching or administrative roles. However, they must keep in mind the Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators applies 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. If an educator inappropriately uses alcohol, tobacco or drugs, even outside of school, the educator may be putting his or her license at risk.

## Don't let alcohol impair your teaching

Ernie Hemingstreet was excited for the sun to rise on a new year teaching AP English. On the first day, a few of his seniors who plan to attend his alma mater in the fall ask Mr. H. where to go on campus for fun. He tells them all about his favorite sports bar, The Bell's Toll, where he always ordered their famous shot, the Bellringer.

In October, Mr. H. chaperones the sophomore camping trip. After a

farewell to parents, Mr. H. helps the kids get set up and settled in their tents. Mr. H. goes to the camp lodge to grab dinner and has a beer while the other teachers keep an eye on the students. All of the students are asleep when Mr. H. returns.

When Mr. H.'s daughter, Pamplona, asks Mr. H. if she and her friends can come to their home after prom, he agrees. When the night comes, he discovers they are drinking wine

in his basement. Mr. H. decides they are better off drinking at his home than somewhere else unsupervised.

During the last week of school, Mr. H.'s best friend, Mark Twine, asks Mr. H. to come over for a drink. Mr. H. and Mark stay up drinking until 4 a.m. Mr. H. feels like death in the morning when he wakes up. He decides to go to school anyway and tough it out.

## Where did Mr. H. overdo it?

- 1: Mr. H. should not talk to students about his personal alcohol use. This could be seen as encouraging students to use alcohol.
- 2: Mr. H. should not drink alcohol while chaperoning a school trip. Mr. H. is responsible for students throughout the entire trip and must be sober at all times. During overnight field trips, educators need to be available in case an emergency occurs after hours.
- 3: Mr. H. should not allow minors to drink alcohol at his house. By turning a blind eye to minors drinking at his house, he is risking losing his job, losing his license and even facing criminal liability. If an educator is worried about students engaging in underage drinking, he or she should report these concerns to parents and administrators.
- 4: Mr. H. was not in the right state to go to school after drinking all night. He still may have had alcohol in his system. Educators may risk accusations of being under the influence if they arrive at school smelling of alcohol or appearing to be hungover.





# DO's & DON'Ts

—with—  
*Crystal Clear*

- DO** take care of your mental health and seek assistance when needed.
- DO** keep alcohol off school property.
- DO** prepare for your students' medical needs during field trips according to your district's policies.
- DO** keep all medication secure around children.

- DON'T** advise or encourage students to take supplements.
- DON'T** take a prescription that is not yours.
- DON'T** post pictures of alcohol or drug use on your social media.
- DON'T** drink alcohol at school or come to school hungover.
- DON'T** discuss your alcohol use in front of students.

## Make Professional Choices!

A principal brings a bottle of wine to give to the school secretary for her 50th birthday.

### Unprofessional choice

The principal should consider what could happen if a student gained access to the wine. He should think of a gift that does not involve alcohol or give the gift off school property and time.

A first-grade teacher is taking her class on a zoo field trip. Four of her students have the same prescription for EpiPens, so she throws all four EpiPens in her backpack with the permission slips.

### Unprofessional choice

The first-grade teacher is responsible for following her school's policy and providing students with their own medications. She should label and bring each student's EpiPen.

A school administrator has two cocktails with dinner, so she decides not to attend the Friday night football game as a spectator.

### Professional choice

The school administrator made the right choice because she is a role model for students. Consider how it would look if students, parents or other administrators perceive her as intoxicated or buzzed at a school event.

A student has a cold at school and asks her one-on-one educational aide for cold medicine. He gives the student the medicine because he doesn't want her to miss class for a minor illness.

### Unprofessional choice

As a school employee, the educational aide may not dispense medication to students unless he is following specific district policy and has consent from the student's parents.

A coach posts a picture to Instagram of himself doing a keg stand on New Year's Eve at his home.

### Unprofessional choice

Even on a private, personal social media account, others could screenshot or repost a picture without the coach's knowledge and spread it to the school community.