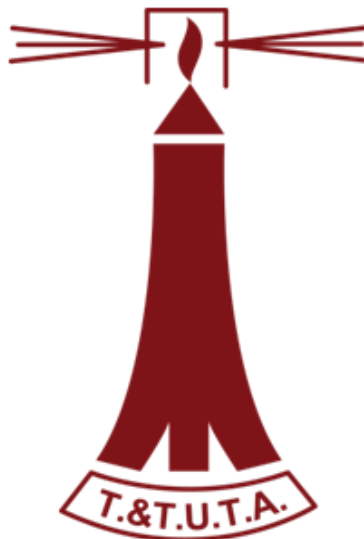




TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO UNIFIED
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

CODE OF ETHICS



“By virtue of the service they render, teachers deserve due respect and esteem within the society... it is only when teachers act as one corporate professional body that teaching will begin to enjoy any degree of status...as one corporate professional body, teachers will be in a position to direct and control their own affairs.

As a united body teachers will be able to...control standards of performance and the ethical behaviour of teachers... (and) maintain professional discipline among teachers...”

Taken from “***Rationale for Having a Single Organization***” COMFUT News Issue #1, June 27th, 1979.

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INTRODUCTION

THE CONSTITUTION of the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (T&TUTA) affirms among the aims and objectives the promotion of "the cause of education" and "the professional, economic, spiritual and social well-being of its members".

In order to help achieve these aims, improve the status of teachers, promote the dignity of the teaching profession and fulfil its responsibilities to education, the Association publishes the CODE OF ETHICS OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO UNIFIED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

The Code is a guide to the personal and professional conduct of teachers who, as they act "in loco parentis", have to discharge their sacred, vocational duties in the education and training of students of all ages and at all levels in the society.

A first Draft Code of Ethics was framed by the Professional Advancement Committee (P.A.C) and published in the TUTOR News of April 1982.

In 1985, the Central Executive formally commissioned the P.A.C to finalise work on the Code of Ethics.

In 1986, the P.A.C formulated a new Draft Code of Ethics, held a national consultation on this draft, was informed by the material from the codes of ethics of other professional and teacher organizations, and obtained suggestions from a cross-section of prominent persons and organizations in Trinidad and Tobago.

Published as an APPENDIX to the Code, and forming an integral part of the accepted guide to teachers' behaviour as outlined in the Code, is the "Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers" adopted by the Special Intergovernmental Conference on the Status of Teachers, Paris, October 5, 1966.

The General Council of Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association formally adopted the Draft Code of Ethics and the Recommendation on Saturday May 14, 1988 at Mount Hope Junior Secondary School. At this same school was launched in 1979 the Committee for the Unification of Teachers (COMFUT), the original parent organization that gave birth to T&TUTA.

The General Council formally declares the CODE OF ETHICS and RECOMMENDATIONS that are printed below as the official CODE OF ETHICS of the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association and enjoins all teachers to adhere to its articles.

SIGNED THIS 7th DAY *August* 1989

Anthony Garcia
President

Urich Loutoo
General Secretary

FOREWORD

It is with heartfelt joy that I congratulate the President and members of the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association on your adoption of a Code of Ethics for teachers. Indeed, this is the dawning of a new era in the teaching profession in Trinidad and Tobago.

Traditionally, the members of the teaching profession have been looked upon as the communicators of knowledge, exemplars of morality and uprightness and as those who will help to guide our children along the path of spirituality to oneness with God. These are expectations which a great number of our teachers continue to live up to despite the many negative factors which have become characteristic of education in our modern society. Your adoption of this Code of Ethics is, therefore, most encouraging for it represents the injection of hope that we need so much for the future of our country's education system. It is your statement of continuing dedication and commitment to the highest ideals synonymous with the teaching profession; it is your statement of the faith you possess in yourselves and in the unique contribution which every one of you is capable of making to the total development of our nation's children – your children. It is also a vote of confidence in TTUTA as a professional body promoting the interests of its members while pursuing the national good.

May I ask God's blessings and guidance on you all as you apply yourselves, with love, to the many challenges ahead. I know that together, in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, we will be able to realize that dream of excellence which we cherish for the education system of Trinidad and Tobago.

CLIVE PANTIN
Minister of Education

1. COMMITMENT TO THE STUDENT

- 1.01 A teacher shall always strive to enhance the intellectual, social and moral growth of students.
- 1.02 A teacher shall evoke in students an appreciation of their self-worth.
- 1.03 A teacher shall strive to instil in students a sense of patriotism and national pride.
- 1.04 A teacher shall develop in students an appreciation of high standards and a desire to strive for excellence.
- 1.05 A teacher shall not divulge, except through professional channels, any information of a personal or domestic nature concerning his students.
- 1.06 A teacher shall not attempt to undermine the confidence of teachers in students, or of students in other students.
- 1.07 A teacher shall take all reasonable care to protect the safety and welfare of students.
- 1.08 A teacher shall not exploit or violate the privileged relationship between teacher and students.
- 1.09 A teacher shall not subject students to mental or physical abuse.
- 1.10 A teacher shall deal justly and considerately each student regardless of sex, ethnic origin, social or economic status, political or religious affiliation.
- 1.11 A teacher shall respect the religious, political and moral beliefs of his students.
- 1.12 A teacher shall maintain high standards of professional competence by providing appropriate learning experiences for his students.
- 1.13 A teacher shall strive to improve the learning facilities and classroom environment for his students.

2. COMMITMENT TO COLLEAGUES

- 2.01 A teacher shall extend due respect to his colleagues, and be willing to work with them, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, status or qualifications.
- 2.02 A teacher shall be loyal to his colleagues and shall stand by decisions mutually or collectively agreed upon.
- 2.03 A teacher shall not make defamatory remarks concerning another teacher.
- 2.04 A teacher shall not verbally or physically abuse a colleague.
- 2.05 A teacher shall not undermine the confidence of students in other teachers.
- 2.06 A teacher shall not criticize the professional competence or professional reputation of a colleague without first discussing the matter with said colleague.
- 2.07 A teacher shall cooperate with other teachers in matters accepted as being in the best interest of students and the school.
- 2.08 A teacher shall not submit reports on fellow teachers knowing such reports to be false and misleading.
- 2.09 A teacher who makes a formal report on the professional competence of a colleague should provide him with a copy of the report.
- 2.10 A teacher, in an administrative or supervisory capacity, when dealing with complaints about other teachers, shall retain an unbiased position, investigate the matter fully, and act in accordance with the principles of natural justice and equity.
- 2.11 A teacher, in an administrative or supervisory position, shall not subscribe to the loss of increments, suspension or dismissal of a teacher, except for a just cause, and without first attempting to counsel that teacher.
- 2.12 A teacher shall not accept a post which becomes available as a result of official action that is being contested by the Association except with the approval of the Association.

- 2.13 A teacher shall respect the decision of his colleagues on committees on which he has served to submit reports to higher authorities even though he may be opposed to their decisions. He shall, however, retain the right to submit a minority report.
- 2.14 A teacher, as administrator, shall provide reasonable facilities for helping to maintain and improve the teaching/learning conditions.

3. COMMITMENT TO THE ADMINISTRATION

- 3.01 A teacher shall honour agreements made between the Association and the Employer.
- 3.02 A teacher shall use the existing channels of communication in dealing with all job-related matters.
- 3.03 A teacher shall be consistent in the execution of school policies and in the enforcement of rules and regulations.
- 3.04 A teacher shall cooperate with educational and related personnel in improving teaching and learning.
- 3.05 A teacher shall observe a reasonable and proper loyalty to the administration and management of the school.
- 3.06 A teacher shall observe all oral or written agreements arrived at with school administration.
- 3.07 A teacher shall report, through established channels, all matters harmful to the learning and teaching conditions of the school.

4. COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION

- 4.01 A teacher shall respect the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice to ethnic origin, religious or political beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics, age, ancestry or place of birth.

- 4.02 A teacher shall not behave in a way that brings the teaching profession into disrepute.
- 4.03 A teacher shall honour his responsibility to his students and refrain from any illicit or inappropriate relationships.
- 4.04 A teacher shall speak and act in such a manner as to be a worthy role model for his students.
- 4.05 A teacher shall dress in a manner consistent with the dignity and honour of the teaching profession.
- 4.06 A teacher shall not denigrate the teaching profession so that able persons lose the desire to enter it.
- 4.07 A teacher shall be unselfish in response to colleagues who seek professional assistance.
- 4.08 A teacher shall be objective in all his judgements, assessments and reports.
- 4.09 A teacher shall not allow prejudice to influence his evaluation of the work of other teachers.
- 4.10 A teacher shall strive to ensure that there is no discrimination in education.
- 4.11 A teacher shall strive to improve working conditions leading to greater professionalism.
- 4.12 A teacher shall not betray the trust under which confidential information is exchanged.
- 4.13 A teacher shall strive to keep abreast of educational developments in his field through ongoing study and research.
- 4.14 A teacher shall maintain high standards of professional competence.
- 4.15 A teacher shall participate in a responsible manner in the development and implementation of policies affecting education.

5. COMMITMENT TO THE ASSOCIATION

- 5.01 A teacher shall accept service in the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association as a responsibility of membership.
- 5.02 A teacher shall lend support to and participate in various activities of the Association as may be decided by the relevant committees within the Association.
- 5.03 A teacher shall promote change from within the Organization for its development.
- 5.04 A teacher shall be constructive in his criticism of the Association.
- 5.05 A teacher wishing to criticize the Association shall do so using the structure specially provided by the Association for this purpose.
- 5.06 A teacher, as far as possible, shall not make individual representation to the Government, the Ministry of Education or Boards of Management to take individual action on matters which should be dealt with by the Association.
- 5.07 A teacher shall honour his commitments to the Association as well as those commitments made in the name of teachers by the Association.
- 5.08 A teacher shall adhere to collective agreements negotiated by the Union.
- 5.09 A teacher, while representing the Association, shall not make commitments on behalf of the Association to any organization or agency without the appropriate approval or endorsement.
- 5.10 A teacher shall not recognize any group except the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association as the official voice of teachers.

APPENDIX

Excerpt from UNESCO Document:

“RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE STATUS OF TEACHERS.”

(Adopted by the Special Intergovernmental Conference on the Status of Teachers, Paris on Conference on the Status of Teachers, Paris on October 5, 1966.

VII. The Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers.

Professional Freedom

61. The teaching profession should enjoy academic freedom in the discharge of professional duties. Since teachers are particularly qualified to judge the teaching aids and methods most suitable for their pupils, they should be given the essential role in the choice and the adaption of teaching material, the selection of textbooks and the application of teaching methods, within the framework of approved programmes, and with the assistance of the educational authorities.

62. Teachers and their organizations should participate in the development of new courses, textbooks and teaching aids.

63. Any systems of inspection or supervision should be designed to encourage and help teachers in the performance of their professional tasks and should be such as not to diminish the freedom, initiative and responsibility of teachers.

64. (1) Where any kind of direct assessment of the teacher's work is required, such assessment should be objective and should be made known to the teacher.

(2) Teachers should have a right to appeal against assessments which they deem to be unjustified.

65. Teachers should be free to make use of such evaluation techniques, as they may deem useful for the appraisal of pupils' progress, but should ensure that no unfairness to individual pupils results.

66. The authorities should give due weight to the recommendations of teachers regarding the suitability of individual pupils for courses and further education of different kinds.

67. Every possible effort should be made to promote close cooperation between teachers and parents in the interest of pupils, but teachers should be protected against unfair or unwarranted interference by parents in matters which are essentially the teacher's professional responsibility.

68. (1) Parents having a complaint against a school or a teacher should be given the opportunity of discussing it, in the first instance, with the school principal and the teacher concerned. Any complaint subsequently addressed to a higher authority should be put in writing and a copy should be supplied to the teacher.

(2) Investigations of complaints should be so conducted that the teachers are given a fair opportunity to defend themselves and that no publicity is given to the proceedings.

69. While teachers should exercise the utmost care to avoid accidents to pupils, employers of teachers should safeguard them against the risk of having damages assessed against them in the event of injury to pupils occurring at school or in school activities away from the school premises or grounds.

Responsibilities of Teachers

70. Recognizing that the status of their profession depends to a considerable extent upon teachers themselves, all teachers should seek to achieve the highest possible standards in all their professional work.

71. Professional standards relating to teacher performance should be defined and maintained with the participation of the teachers' organizations.

72. Teachers and teachers' organizations should seek to cooperate fully with authorities in the interest of the pupils, of the education service and of society generally.

73. Codes of ethics or of conduct should be established by the teachers' organizations, since such codes greatly contribute to ensuring the prestige of the profession and the exercise of professional duties in accordance with agreed principles.

74. Teachers should be prepared to take part in extra-curricular activities for the benefit of pupils and adults.

Relationship between Teachers and the Education Service as a Whole

75. In order that teachers may discharge their responsibilities, authorities should establish and regularly use recognized means of consultation with teachers' organizations on such matters as educational policy, school organization, and new developments in the education service.

76. Authorities and teachers should recognize the importance of the participation of teachers, through their organizations and in other ways, in steps designed to improve the quality of the education service, in educational research, and in the development and dissemination of new improved methods.

77. Authorities should facilitate the establishment and the work of panels designed, within a school or within a broader framework, to promote the cooperation of teachers of the same subject and should take due account of the opinions and suggestions of such panels.

78. Administrative and other staff who are responsible for aspects of the education service should seek to establish good relations with teachers and this approach should be equally reciprocated.

Rights of Teachers

79. The participation of teachers in social and public life should be encouraged in the interest of the teacher's personal development, of the education service and of society as a whole.

80. Teachers should be free to exercise all civic rights generally enjoyed by citizens and should be eligible for public office.

81. Where the requirements of public office are such that the teacher has to relinquish his teaching duties, he should be retained in the profession for seniority and pension purpose and should be able to return to his previous post or to an equivalent post after his term of public office has expired.

82. Both salaries and working conditions for teachers should be determined through the process of negotiations between teachers' organizations and the employers of teachers.

83. Statutory or voluntary machinery should be established whereby the right of teachers to negotiate through their organizations with their employers, either public or private, is assured.

84. Appropriate joint machinery should be set up to deal with the settlement of disputes between the teachers and their employers arising out of terms and conditions of employment. If this means that procedures established for these purposes should be exhausted or if there should be a breakdown in negotiations between the parties, teachers' organizations should have the right to take such other steps as are normally open to other organizations in the defence of their legitimate interests.