

CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS Lithuania



MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION,
SCIENCE
AND SPORT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA



2019



... you need to have an inner light, shining from inside for everyone standing in the dark on the road, so that they could find light inside themselves and follow their road, instead of staying in the dark.

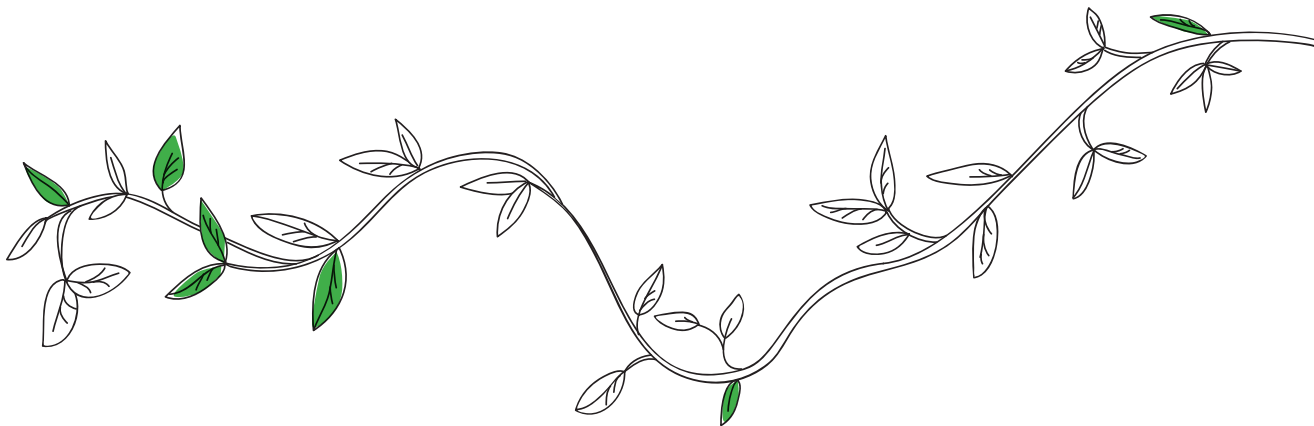
(M. K. Čiurlionis)

- 1. The Code of Ethics for Educators** (hereinafter referred to as the Code) defines the key requirements of professional conduct and obligations for pedagogical staff and freelance teachers (hereinafter referred to as Educators) to pursue ethical and professional conduct with pupils, their parents (carers, guardians) and other family members, colleagues, and community.
- 2.** In their activities, educators follow the following main principles of conduct and activity:
 - 2.1. respect;**
 - 2.2. justice;**
 - 2.3. recognition of human rights;**
 - 2.4. responsibility;**
 - 2.5. fairness;**
 - 2.6. care and solidarity.**
- 3. The principle of respect.** By following this principle, an educator admits that communication with pupils, their parents (carers, guardians), other family members, and members of the community of an institution is based on recognition of

human dignity and incomparable worth and trust, thus, creating a safe open atmosphere to promote self-esteem and creativity.

4. **The principle of justice.** By following this principle, an educator admits the diversity of educational needs of pupils, considers the peculiarities of social and cultural environment of every pupil, and acts impartially when assessing a pupil's achievement and progress, educational needs, participation of individual pupils or groups in the community life and when dealing with conflicts.
5. **The principle of recognition of human rights.** By following this principle, an educator observes a pupil's rights and lawful interests, practices the principles of equal rights and non-discrimination, and ensures that social, racial, language, religious, and other factors do not impact his/her conduct in professional activities.
6. **The principle of responsibility.** By following this principle, an educator acts as a professional, continuously improves his/her professional competences needed for quality educational work – education is based on every pupil's capacities, educational needs, and inclinations.
7. **The principle of fairness.** By following this principle, an educator provides true information about his/her experience, professional situation, and competences, responsively uses resources in his/her professional activities, observes the internal procedures of an educational institution, does not abuse his/her position and a pupil's (all pupils') trust, does not use it for personal benefits.
8. **The principle of care and solidarity.** By following this principle and practicing human solidarity, an educator communicates with pupils, their parents (carers, guardians), other family members of the pupils, colleagues, and community members in pursuit of wellbeing of pupils, demonstrating understanding of the emotional state of a pupil (pupils) through empathy and actions.

9. Adherence to the requirements of the Code is a personal commitment and the matter of honour of an educator who aspires to fulfil his/her duties properly and competently, to raise the prestige of the profession and to increase trust in the educational system of the country. The breach of these requirements entails responsibility stipulated in the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania and other legal acts regulating educators' activities. When responsibility for a breach of the requirements of the Code is in question, the opinion of the ethical commission appointed by the self-government institution and the head of the establishment where the educator works is assessed and considered.
10. Every educational institution establishes the norms of ethics and conduct for its community of educators with consideration of the requirements of the Code.





application

OF THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS

“Education is an activity aimed at providing an individual with the fundamentals of full independent life and helping him/her in continuous improvement of his/her capacities. <...> Education protects and creates national identity, instils the values that make human life meaningful, social life – harmonious and full of solidarity, the life of the state – progressive and safe...”

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Agreements on common strategic goals and individual obligations, responsibilities, and rights need to be in place for successful operation of this large educational community and for meeting public expectations.

The basic agreements for the school are Lithuania’s Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030” and The State Education Strategy 2013–2022. It is established in the Law on Education, that the school must guarantee a healthy and safe environment, openness to local community, fulfilment of obligations agreed by community members, and education of good quality. The Law on Education establishes not only the rights and duties of pupils, parents, and educators, but also requests a written agreement between a pupil and the school that defines their rights and duties. The agreement describes very particular binding obligations of both parties. It places responsibility and understanding of the social life principles, respect for others, human dignity and shows to young people how strongly all of us are related to each other.





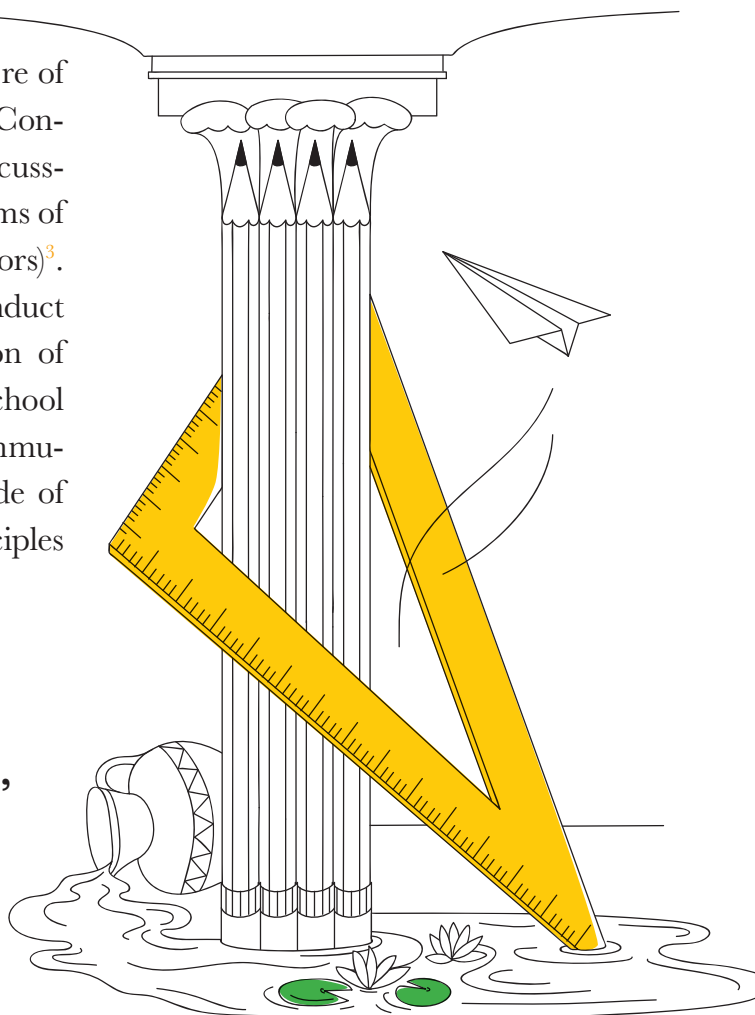
The purpose of this publication is to introduce¹ and expand on the philosophy of the Code of Ethics, the principles and values of ethical conduct of educators, peculiarities of their application and to encourage discussions on professional ethics matters among educators in their communities. We hope this publication will be of use when drawing up or specifying norms of ethics and conduct of community members in schools and other educational establishments.

The present publication is not a comprehensive set of examples of inappropriate or “risky” conduct related to communication between an educator and a pupil, communication among educators, or/and between educators and parents (carers, guardians), communication between an educator and the school head. Still, educators will find recommendations for appropriate behaviour in certain situations.

¹ The Code of Ethics for Educators (hereinafter referred to as the Code of Ethics) was drawn up in accordance with Article 51 (Good repute) of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania and approved by the Order No. V-561 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 11 June 2018.

The school that operates in the culture of common agreements and follows the Concept of a Good School² is capable of discussing, agreeing upon and establishing norms of conduct of community members (educators)³. A detailed set of rules for educators' conduct would contradict the essential provision of the modern education policy – trust in school as a self-creating and self-regulating community of professionals, therefore, the Code of Ethics contains the list of only key principles of ethical conduct and activity:

- **respect,**
- **justice,**
- **recognition of human rights,**
- **responsibility,**
- **fairness,**
- **care and solidarity.**



² The Concept of Good School was approved by the Order No. V-1308 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 21 December 2015.

³ Paragraph 3, Article 43 of the Law on Education imposes obligation on every school to establish the norms of conduct for its community members, taking the requirements of the Code of Ethics into consideration.

Key principles

OF CONDUCT AND ACTIVITY OF EDUCATORS

THE PRINCIPLE OF RESPECT

By following this principle, an educator:

- is capable of critical judgement of his/her attitude and approaches and their impact on his/her activities;
- acknowledges that communication with pupils and their parents (carers, guardians) must be based on mutual respect, trust and, where necessary, confidentiality; and realises that these qualities have direct impact on developing a child's personality, life at school and quality of teaching (learning);
- contributes to developing a community based on mutual respect and tolerance;
- bases his/her educational activity on humanistic values;
- listens to, evaluates and respects the opinion of pupils, their parents (carers, guardians), colleagues, management staff; in case of difference in opinion, gives arguments politely, is capable of effective handling of conflicts;
- encourages every pupil's self-expression, builds self-esteem, notices every pupil's progress and achievement, celebrates their success, fosters and demonstrates positivity, by using effective methods promotes pupils' motivation for learning.

THE PRINCIPLE OF JUSTICE

By following this principle, an educator:

- believes that differences of people are more of a norm rather than exception, therefore, perceives the community of pupils and educators as the entity of individuals;
- understands the reasons for diversity of pupils' educational needs, recognises different learning styles, considers educational needs of the pupils in their educational activity;
- selects the most suitable approaches in educational situations, considering diversity of pupils and their parents (carers, guardians), their needs and expectations;
- believes that every pupil, regardless of his/her social and cultural environment, has intellectual potential, capacity to aspire to progress and to reach good results; promotes motivation for learning.

THE PRINCIPLE OF RECOGNITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

By following this principle, an educator:

- follows the principle that educational system must be socially fair, ensuring implementation of personal rights, granting access to quality education and equal opportunities to a degree, qualification, and professional development;
- has arguments and voices them convincingly when presenting principles of social justice and equal opportunities; defends these principles when necessary;
- respects rights and freedoms of every individual, creates conditions for pupils' expression and identity, fosters tolerance and friendly relationships among individuals of different ethnic and religious background;
- creates conditions for every pupil to foster his/her identity.

THE PRINCIPLE OF RESPONSIBILITY

By following this principle, an educator:

- acts fairly, without distorting factual information, timely shares relevant information by communicating and cooperating with pupils' parents (carers, guardians), colleagues, and management; follows established guidelines when informing parents (carers, guardians) about their children's condition, educational and learning needs, adaptation of educational process, provision of assistance, school attendance, behaviour, etc.;
- regularly evaluates own competences; using feedback received from the management, colleagues, pupils, and their parents (carers, guardians) foresees own professional development considering appropriate areas for improvement and formats;
- if needed, searches for information and consolidates resources necessary for the development of every pupil's personality, granting dialogue-based and experiential learning through cooperation with pupils' parents (carers, guardians), colleagues, and management;
- acts responsibly in social media and other public activities;
- respects professionalism and confidentiality in his / her activities.

THE PRINCIPLE OF FAIRNESS

By following this principle, an educator:

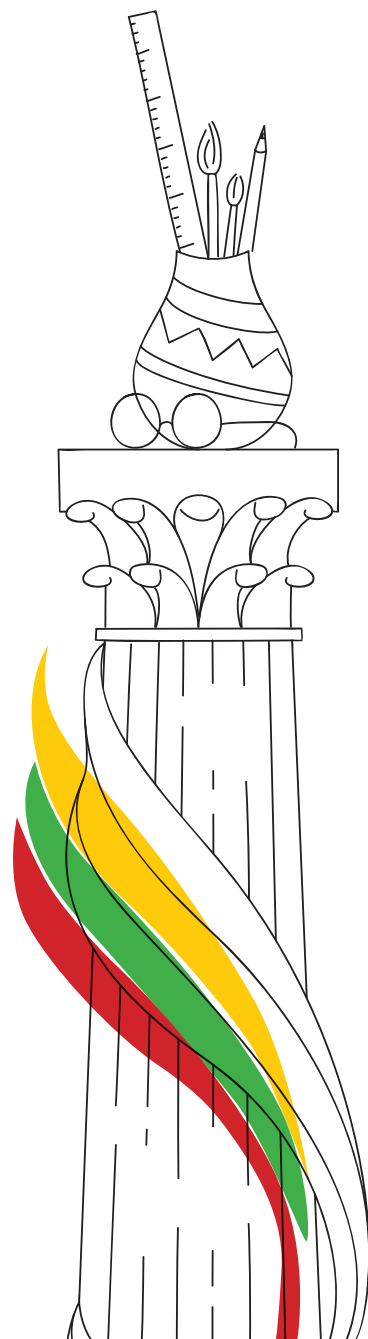
- reasonably uses resources in the workplace with an intention to ensure meaningful and independent activities for every pupil at school, to increase their motivation for learning and self-confidence, to assist pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs;

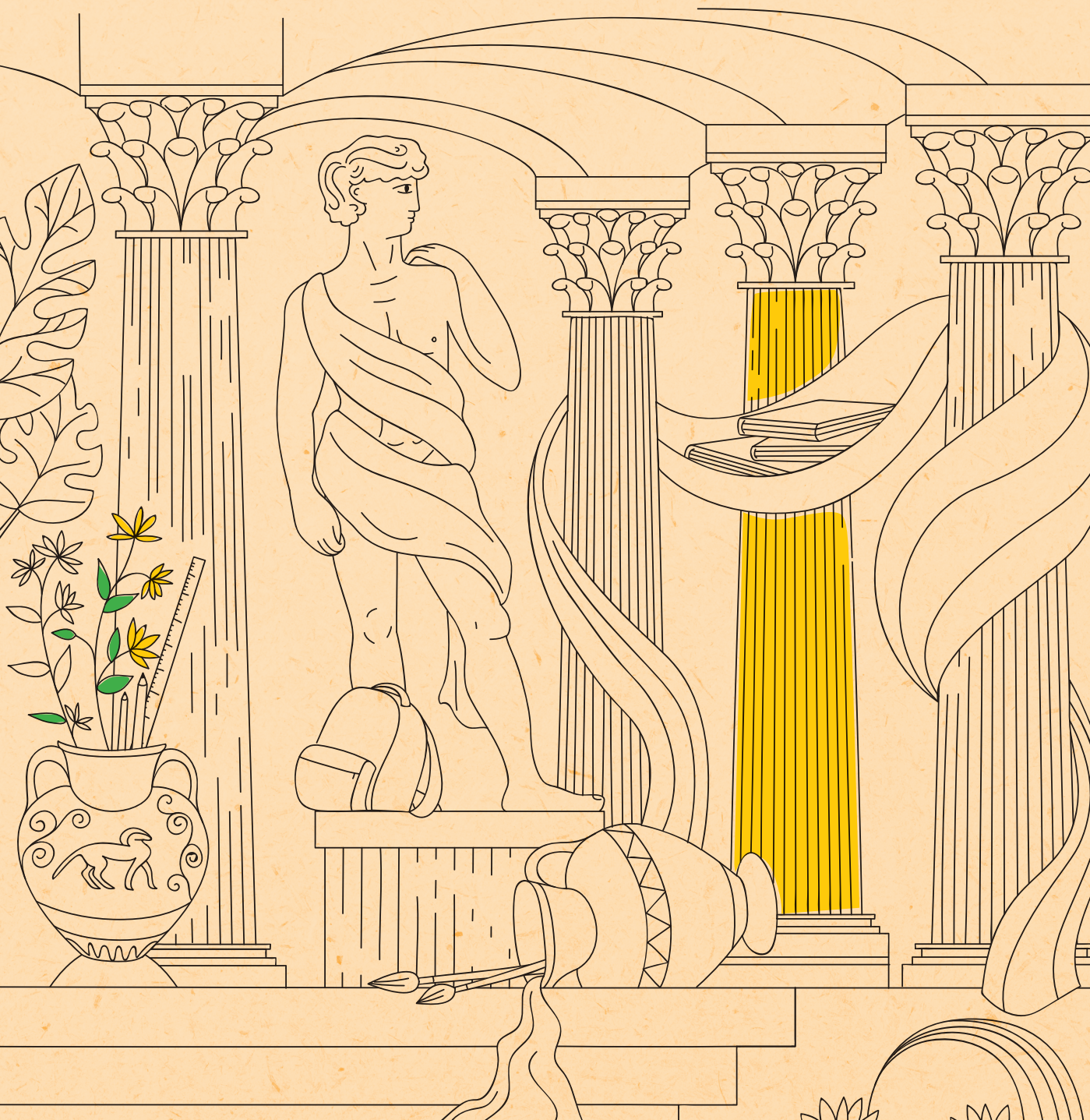
- does not use his/her position (post) for personal benefits;
- always provides true information about pupils, own workplace, himself / herself, own activities.

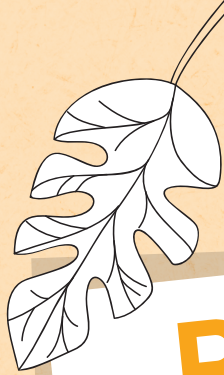
THE PRINCIPLE OF CARE AND SOLIDARITY

By following this principle, an educator:

- is attentive to every pupil's feelings, acceptance, respectability, safety, happiness, and meaningful engagement at school; if needed, in cooperation with a pupil's parents (carers, guardians), and colleagues, takes measures to improve the pupil's feelings;
- seeks to ensure that every pupil has opportunities to socialise, for example, through a membership, belonging, sharing, caring, helping, duties, participation in self-government of the school;
- if needed, in cooperation with a pupil's parents (carers, guardians), and colleagues, takes measures to improve the emotional well-being and social inclusion of every child;
- maintains harmonious relationships with pupils, their parents (carers, guardians), and community; understands others and demonstrate empathy; tries to help pupils to succeed at school and in life.







Responsibility

FOR ADHERENCE TO THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATORS' CONDUCT AND ACTIVITY

“The school must ensure a healthy and safe environment preventing the manifestations of violence, abuse, and bad habits; the implementation of educational, teaching, study and development programmes; openness to local community; the signing of teaching (and learning) agreements; the fulfilment of agreed obligations; and quality education.”⁴

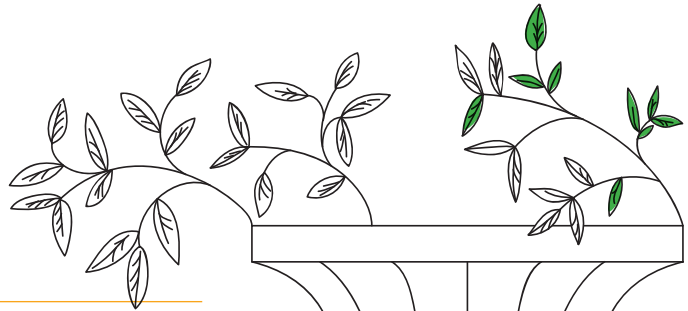
⁴ Paragraph 11, Article 43 of the Law on Education.

The teaching (and learning) agreement defines obligations of both parties (the education provider and the recipient). It sets forth obligations of a school in respect to pupils and parents (carers, guardians), for example, to ensure proper learning conditions and safety in educational process, to provide necessary assistance, to assess learning achievements impartially, etc. It discusses main clauses of the school rules and procedures. Also, the agreement stipulates parents' (carers', guardians') obligations, for example, to ensure punctual and regular attendance of school by a child, to foster respect to community members, to promptly inform the school about a pupil's absence due to illness, to regularly discuss learning progress with the child and educators, to cooperate with the educators and the school management for correcting a pupil's behaviour, etc.

The pupil has the right to be educated in a psychologically, spiritually and physically safe environment based on mutual respect; to get learning load and environment in accordance with hygienic requirements; to have the right to fair assessment of learning achievements, etc. The Law on Education also establishes the pupil's duties.

*Upon signing the teaching (and learning) agreement, a pupil must observe all **provisions of the agreement**, requirements of the internal guidelines that establish procedures of the school, the norms of pupil conduct, respect teachers and other members of the school community, their rights and lawful interests⁵.*

⁵ Article 46 of the Law on Education.



*The Law on Education discusses **rights and duties of teachers.***

For example, a teacher has the right to choose approaches and forms of educational activity, to participate in self-government of the school, to work in a psychologically, spiritually and physically safe environment based on mutual respect, to have a properly equipped workplace in accordance with hygienic requirements. Diversely, the teacher must educate pupils according to their capabilities and inclinations, increase their learning motivation, provide assistance, cooperate with other teachers, etc. Teaching is prohibited to a person whose conduct brings the profession into disrepute⁶.



⁶ Point 2, Paragraph 8, Article 48 of the Law on Education.



Every teacher must observe the norms of ethics/conduct of an educational establishment⁷.

Adherence to the requirements of the Code is a personal commitment and a matter of honour of an educator aspiring to the proper and quality fulfilment of his/her duties, contributing to the prestige of the profession, and increasing trust in the educational system of the country. The breach of these requirements entails responsibility stipulated in the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania and other legal acts regulating educators' activities. When responsibility for a breach of the requirements of the Code is in question, the opinion of the ethical commission appointed by the self-government institution and the head of the establishment where the educator works is assessed and considered⁸.

The head of an educational establishment must ensure adherence to the requirements of the Code of Ethics for Educators⁹.



The head of an educational establishment is held responsible for transparency of adopted decisions, informing the community members of the educational establishment, professional development of the staff, a healthy and safe environment preventing any forms of violence, abuse and bad habits, adherence to the requirements of the Code of Ethics for Educators.

⁷ Point 3, Paragraph 2, Article 49 of the Law on Education.

⁸ Paragraph 9 of the Code of Ethics for Educators approved by the Order No. V-561 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 11 June 2018.

⁹ Paragraph 3, Article 59 of the Law on Education.



Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania
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