



TEACHER ETIQUETTE – A SUSTAINABLE TOOL FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT “Freedom without rules doesn't work. And communities do not work unless they are regulated by etiquette.”

Judith Martin

Etiquette is a code of behaviour that outlines expectations for social behaviour within a society, or among members of a particular profession or group. It is actually the formal behaviour of a person. Teachers have broad professional standards based on their interactions with students, parents, community members, colleagues, staff and administrators. A teacher maintaining a proper etiquette will be deemed as capable, professional and more intelligent among the others teachers. When proper professional etiquette is used, all involved are able to feel more comfortable, and things tend to flow more smoothly. Professional etiquette plays a monumental role in making a lasting positive first impression. In school situations, displaying proper teacher etiquette will help in improving the quality of education and give one a competitive edge over others who may not be using proper etiquette.

KEYWORDS : Teacher etiquette, quality education

INTRODUCTION

Etiquette is the science of living. It embraces everything. It is ethics. It is honour. Teacher etiquette includes a variety of complex skills and interactions with students, staff and parents etc. A teacher characterized by the following etiquettes ensures that he gains professional attainment and all students receive remarkable quality education and an equitable opportunity to succeed in life.

PERSONA ETIQUETTE

Attire

“Dress like a professional”. A teacher should dress in a comfortable professional manner. The dress a teacher wears gives a bit more power, authority, and stature in the classes. It can make one feel better about what they do and does make a difference to the students. It elevates the profession as well.

Punctuality

Teachers have to abide by the school's contracted hours and show up on time (even early) for all work functions such as meetings and professional development events. If the teacher needs to leave early, they have to let the administrator know ahead of time. Most of the time they will be understanding, particularly if these absences are infrequent or if they are aware of an extenuating circumstance.

Effectiveness

Time is a precious commodity for teachers. Teachers should use work time effectively and appropriately. Every second a teacher has with the students should be a meaningful and productive second. Wasted time does add up. A teacher who loses as little as five minutes of instructional minutes per day due to inefficiencies wastes fifteen hours of opportunity over the course of an 180-day school year. That extra time would likely make a significant difference for every student, but particularly those who are struggling learners. Successful teachers establish procedures and expectations that minimize wasteful downtime and maximize engaging learning opportunities.

Behaviour in meetings

Teachers should engage in respectful behaviour during all school meetings. Whatever your role is in a meeting, you shouldn't be checking your cell phone or computer unless there is some type of emergency. If you need to contact someone during a longer training session, they have to step out of the room discretely or wait for a break.

Professional development

In a knowledge-driven society, it is necessary for every person to continue learning throughout his/her life. Since a teacher is expected to equip his/her students for life-long learning, it is imperative for him/her also to become a life-long learner. The study of newspapers, magazines, professional journals and new books in his/her field of

specialization; discussion with colleagues on different themes of education; undertaking research and experimentation, participation in study circles, seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. and participation in INSET programmes through face to face or distance mode are some of the strategies which a teacher can use to grow professionally and also to move upwards in the professional hierarchy.

Communication

All communication through school technology (phones, e-mail, etc.) with fellow teachers should be something that one should be comfortable with any administrator or technology staff member reading. They should be free from spelling errors and grammar mistakes. The teacher should take the time to proofread all e-mails and class mailings. They should have someone else proofread all professional documents before submitting them.

ETIQUETTE WITH COLLEAGUES

An Etiquette teacher

- creates a culture that encourages purposeful collaboration and dialogue among colleagues.
- treats other members of the profession with respect and dignity
- refrains from making unsubstantiated allegations against colleagues
- avoids making derogatory statements about colleagues, especially in the presence of pupils, other teachers, officials or parents,
- maintains confidentiality of information concerning colleagues
- uses discretion when talking about students and anything confidential with other teachers.
- uses appropriate language and sticks to appropriate topics in the school environment, particularly in front of students.
- uses proper social media etiquette

ETIQUETTE WITH NON-TEACHING STAFF

Teachers or not, everyone who works in a school plays an important role. The teacher should treat them with due respect. They should appreciate their work with students and around the school in general. It's important to use discretion when talking with other staff members also.

ETIQUETTE WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Besides staff, there are many other stakeholders in the reputation of the institution and of the teaching profession and also in the education of children, such as parents and representatives of the community. A teacher should constantly strive to seek their involvement in the affairs of the institution and discuss with them the problems, programmes and plans of the institution.

ETIQUETTE WITH ADMINISTRATORS

Respect

Even those who have great teaching positions will most likely encounter one or two administrators during their teaching careers who they really don't respect or just don't get along with very well. Regardless of any differences, it is still important to treat the administrators with respect both directly and with other co-workers.

Communication

A teacher should learn how the administrators would like to communicate. Some administrators appreciate a quick phone call or e-mail to give a heads up about an issue, even if it may require a longer discussion later, while others would rather talk it all out in person.

Maintain an appropriate relationship

Administrators are on a higher rung in the chain of command. They are not friends. Thus, it is not appropriate to be friends with the administrators the way that one can be with the fellow teachers.

ETIQUETTE WITH PARENTS

A teacher should establish a relationship of trust with parents/guardians in the interest of all round development of students. Teacher being the central figure in the educational system has a connectivity with the students, both inside and outside the classroom, his/her colleagues, and the parents. A majority of parents welcome being kept informed of the performance of the child in the school, both in and outside the classroom. The good work done by the student can be shared with the parents as this is likely to lead to better appreciation of the school. Students at the school stage are in an impressionable age. They are sometimes, likely to go astray and timely correction in their misdemeanour can check later agony to parents. A proper channel of communication between the teacher and the parents can be of great help to the students. Most parents do not want to hear about an important issue with their child, particularly if it's negative, over the phone or through an e-mail. It is also not important to introduce a major issue or concern at a parent teacher conference. In most cases, it is appropriate to schedule an in person meeting to talk about such topics. Parents will be more receptive and everyone will be able to communicate more clearly than they would over the phone or through e-mail.

ETIQUETTE WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

As a teacher in the community, it's important to maintain a public image as a good role model for the students. This means making smart choices when they are in community places where one may run into students and staff and in public forums online such as Facebook.

ETIQUETTE WITH STUDENTS

Appropriate relationships

A teacher should always keep a dignified relationship with the students. Students are not teacher's friends. They are also not one's own kids. It is necessary to save the sacredness of student-teacher relationship. Kids are looking for a positive teacher role model. The teacher needs to fill that role the best one can and not try to be something that one shouldn't be for them.

Setting an example with technology

Teachers expect their students not to fool around on the computer, answer their cell phones, or text during class. The teacher has to set an example by not engaging in these behaviours either unless there is some sort of an emergency or something that cannot wait (i.e. a phone call from the principal).

Respect

All students deserve to be treated with the same respect that you give adults. Take the time to hear their feelings and opinions. Even a few minutes may make a world of difference for that student.

Treat all students with love and affection

The demonstration of genuine love and affection by teachers for their students is essential for learning to happen. The teacher should treat all children with love and affection irrespective of their school performance and achievement level is the core of the teaching learning process. Teachers should create trust, confidence, interest, enthusiasm and hope and not fear, frustration and disappointment in the students. The approaches in this regard need not be defined as each teacher has the potential to design his/her behavioural styles to provide an affable support to children.

Respect the value of being just and impartial to all students

School is a place where social justice and equity have to be practised

and valued by the teachers. Teachers' own belief in democratic principles, tolerance, social justice and equity prepares a better climate for students' learning of these values. Impartial attitude and non-discriminatory practices towards all students should be ingrained in the school practices. The teacher's personal belief pattern on caste, religion, sex, economic status, language and place of birth, if not in conformity with Constitutional tenets, will severely affect the equity fabric of the class.

Facilitate students' physical, social, intellectual, emotional and moral development

Childhood is a period of growth and change requiring development of child's physical and mental capabilities to the fullest. Currently in the schooling process, much stress is given to cognitive development (the traditional 3 Rs) which needs to be broadened to other areas of child development. The teacher should act as a facilitator for the students to engage them in diverse activities for their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and moral development. The physical development of students as an important aim of education should be encouraged through physical education activities. Helping students understand the social context, its problems, social values and to inculcate emotional intelligence through teaching learning process, would benefit them for their all-round development. Physical and emotional security is the cornerstone for all learning right from the primary to the secondary school years and even afterwards.

Maintain the confidentiality of the information concerning students and dispense such information only to those who are legitimately entitled to it

It is the ethical responsibility of teachers to maintain the confidentiality of information which the student has shared or the teacher has obtained from different sources. The information could be shared with others very judiciously for the betterment of students. If parents need to be informed in certain cases, the information may be communicated in true spirit. Elements of personal life of the child when divulged publically can cause an irretrievable damage to his/her growth and development, as well as his/her personality.

Refrain from subjecting any child to fear, trauma, anxiety, physical punishment, sexual abuse and mental and emotional harassment

The teacher should take all appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Observance of new classroom rules in the context of the guidelines of the NCPCR in view of its status as a law enforcing body, need to be the guiding principle for teacher's behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The teacher has been eulogized in the Indian context in sublime terms. The 'Guru' of ancient era was a person par excellence. In modern times we have visualized teacher as one who undertakes the onerous responsibility of shaping the destiny of the nation in the classrooms (Education Commission, 1964-66). With such expectations, the teacher symbolizes the best in every facet of his/her personality. The style of his/her dress, the style and content of communication, the way he collaborates with others in school, the example he/she sets for his students create an indelible influence on the young minds. The teacher should keep a dignified demeanour commensurate with the expectations from a teacher as a role model.

Though it has become hard for the etiquettes to grow up in this fast changing society it should be felt by all teachers that teacher etiquette and quality education go together. It is the responsibility of every teacher to contribute to the enhancement of quality education. Displaying proper teacher etiquette will help in improving the quality of education and give the person a competitive edge over others who may not be using proper etiquette.

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