

## Introduction

**T**he Constitution of the Jamaica Teachers' Association stipulates that among the objectives of the Association is the promotion of high professional, ethical and moral standards among teachers. The Code of Ethics is one of the ways by which the Association seeks to accomplish this objective.

**T**he JTA Code of Ethics came into effect in 1977 after intensive and extensive discussion of the draft circulated to Schools, Parish and District Associations. It was amended by annual conference in 1992.

**I**t is a tool to assist teachers in evaluating their behaviour and conduct.

## Jamaica Teachers' Association

### *Code of Ethics*

#### Preamble

**T**he teacher recognises the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The necessity to earn the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, students, parents and the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct.

**T**he Code of Ethics of the Jamaica Teachers' Association sets standards of conduct for teachers in Jamaica.

**T**he term "teacher" as used in this Code of Ethics includes principal.

## Principles

### Principle 1 - in Relation to Students

- i. The teacher speaks to and acts towards pupils in a respectful and dignified manner.
- ii. The teacher does not discriminate against students on the basis of class, colour, creed, status, religious or political belief.
- iii. The teacher does not engage in illicit/ indiscreet actions involving his/ her students.

- iv. The teacher does not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
- v. The teacher does not act in such manner as might lead his/her student/students into breaches of the law accepted moral or social codes of behaviour.
- vi. The teacher does not disclose confidential information about students unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

### Principle 2 - in Relation to Colleagues

- i. The teacher does not undermine the position, status or influence of any colleague.
- ii. The teacher does not accept a position where there is dispute surrounding the vacancy of the position.
- iii. The teacher refers to the Association disputes with colleagues arising from his/ her work or professional activities which cannot be resolved at the local level.
- iv. The teacher recognises the authority of school administrators and seeks to influence administrative policies and practices through accepted channels.
- v. The teacher-administrator respects staff members and provides opportunities for them to participate in the decision-making processes of the school.
- vi. The teacher seeks to operate at all times in a context of mutual respect for the rights of other teachers.



### Principle 3 - in Relation to the Association

- i. The teacher adheres to Association policy and the decisions of its governing bodies and seeks to change these only through the Association's constitutional channels.
- ii. The teacher accepts as a professional obligation participation in the activities of the Association.
- iii. The teacher honours commitments made on his/ her behalf by the Association.
- iv. No group of teachers or any teacher purporting to speak on behalf of such group makes representations to government, its members or officials or any other authority on matters affecting teachers generally or advocates a change in educational policy without the knowledge and consent of the Association.
- v. The teacher adheres to collective agreements negotiated by the organization; in case of any disagreement, he registers his protest through the constitutional channels provided within the Association.
- vi. In the event of a dispute arising between a member and the Association, either party seeks to settle such a dispute through the constitutional channels of the Association.
- vii. The member does not hold membership in any other teachers' union or organisation with principles, objectives and operations which are in conflict with those of the JTA.

### Principle 4 - in Relation to Employers

- i. The teacher honours agreement made in his contract or term of employment.
- ii. The teacher notifies all Boards to which he/ she has sent applications as soon as he/ she has accepted a position.
- iii. The teacher, intending to terminate his employment with a school authority, gives notice of his/ her intentions according to regulations laid down by the authorities.
- iv. The teacher does not accept a position with any employer whose relations with the Association are unsatisfactory without consultation with the Association.

### Principle 5 - General

- i. The teacher does not engage in activities which adversely affect his professional status or ability to perform adequately his/ her duties as a teacher.
- ii. The teacher does not engage in actions which disrupt the peace, order, discipline, and work of the institution in which he/she is employee except for industrial actions agreed upon by the Association.

### Postscript

This Code of Ethics applies to all members of the Jamaica Teachers' Association. A complaint of violation of the principles outlined above made to the Association by any person or group may be regarded as a charge of unprofessional conduct and shall be investigated by the Association through channels outlined in its legal documents.