

Ethics, Integrity and You

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SAMPLE

From the Editor's Point of View

You might be wondering why School House Excellence feels there is a need to have a division that keeps its focus on ethics. You might assume that schooling's focus is a simple one. As simple as the concepts presented in the 80's R&B song whose lyrics reminded us that "it's about faith" and "it's about trust". Alas, no. It about much more.

The phrase that drives our focus on ethics is *in loco parentis*. This legal term defines school personnel's responsibility to protect students. Additionally the term indicates that educators exercise the same level of control over a student as the student's parent. Responsibility and control can partner with faith and trust but ethics needs to be somewhere in that mixture. Educators exercise a great deal of influence on the children they serve. That influence has consequences for today and tomorrow. Think about it. Educators build the future by working with the people who will develop, lead, serve, and set the mores for the communities of the future. It's a huge responsibility!

Educators must go beyond faith and trust to serve as lighthouses for right and wrong and be paragons of integrity. Educators must maintain the public trust whether they serve in the classroom, the front office or in central staff.

Each month, you, the reader will be able to come to this site or to your email inbox if you subscribe and learn more about ethics and integrity for schools.

I look forward to serving you.

Charlene C. Burroughs, Editor
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Everyday Ethics

It's Thursday and the fifth grade students at Castlerock Elementary are excited because it's the last day of school this week. Everyone will be out of school both tomorrow and Monday. As a reward for good behavior, the fifth grade team will be showing a movie this afternoon.

Before the movie, Mr. Mancuso takes his class the short walk down the hallway for a restroom break. During the break one of his students, Al, runs out of the boys' room and swings his leather belt at the other boys as they try to come in or out of the door. Mr. Mancuso tells Al to stop, however, he continues to swing the belt. Mr. Mancuso steps in the path of the belt and takes it from Al before he can swing it at any other student.

Since Al can no longer tease his classmates, he decides his teacher is now fair game. He starts cursing and taunting Mr. Mancuso. Mr. Mancuso tells Al he needs to be quiet. Al just gets louder and louder. He gets so loud, in fact, that Mr. Martin, another fifth grade teacher, comes to his door to see what's going on.

As Mr. Martin stands in the doorway of his classroom, he hears Mr. Mancuso tells Al once more that he needs to be quiet. When he does not, he sees Mancuso reach over, put his right hand around Al's throat, push him against the wall and lift him in the air. He watches as fear fills Al's eyes and he begins to cry. After a while, Mr. Mancuso releases Al and takes him and the rest of the students back to the classroom.

What should Mr. Martin do?

1. Call the Child Abuse Hotline and report this incident.
2. Say nothing. It could be him losing control the next time and he may need his co-worker's support.
3. Call the child's parents