CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
Second Online Survey: Feedback Summary
Oct 2016

Building on our initial set of opening questions, the second survey examined what aspects of teaching should be covered by a code as opposed to school policy, how well the current Code of Ethics addressed issues arising from some specific scenarios, and what else we can do to make it easier for the profession to continue to contribute to this and other processes.

The survey was open for one month, from 15 September to 17 October 2016. The link to the survey was promoted through our Highlighter, our facebook page, and the home page of the Education Council website and people were encouraged to share the link with others.

In the end we received 542 responses, building further on the 956 responses from the initial survey. This document provides a summary of the feedback received and the key themes that were identified through the range of supplementary comments.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The responses covered a similar spread as the first survey, with approximately 40% from those working in a primary education setting, 30% secondary education, and 20% from early childhood settings. We also had smaller numbers of participants from Māori medium, tertiary, intermediate, RTLB, area schools, special education and other specialist roles.

The majority of participants identified themselves as teachers (51%), followed by those in leaderships roles such as DPs, Deans etc (14%). There were also a number of Principals (13%), Centre Managers (9%), and a small number other support roles (relief teachers, teacher aides, RTLB teachers, and very small number of undergraduates and parents as well).

Once again, longer serving members of the profession made up the majority of participants, but we saw slightly higher numbers of those newer to the profession than last time:

- More than 15 years 60%
- 10-15 years 15%
- 6-10 years 13%
- 3-6 years 8%
- 0-2 years 4%
The first section of the survey was built around a couple of scenarios, based on actual cases that have come to the Education Council for review. They explored the role of the code, local policy, and the application of the existing Code of Ethics.

**Q1:** The first scenario outlined a school camp situation where some of the teachers and parent helpers brought out several of bottles of alcohol once the students were in bed, with a number of photos of drunken behaviour finding their way to Facebook. The survey asked what aspects of this situation should be covered by the code and what aspects by school policies.

- Respondents typically felt that the key issues raised by this scenario should be covered in both the code and school policy, but with different levels of detail or emphasis.
- The issues of role modelling, damaging the reputation of the profession, and speaking out if a colleague is in breach of the code were seen as key focus areas for the code.
- Whereas, issues such as alcohol use, social media, and complying with health and safety regulations were seen as the primarily issues for school policy.

In the supporting comments it was suggested that the code should ‘provide guidelines for schools to incorporate into their policies.’ Another participant highlighted the Ministry’s EOTC (education outside the classroom) guidelines that schools should be aware of. The majority of the remaining comments expressed disbelief that a scenario like this could arise in today’s environment and highlighted a strong view of the general inappropriateness of alcohol in this situation.

**How well the Code of Ethics relates to this scenario**

Participants were also asked how well the current Code of Ethics covers this situation:

- The majority (56%) felt it covered it reasonably well by providing general principles
- 22% felt it did not cover the situation well or provide any useful specific guidance.
- A smaller proportion (16%) of people felt it covered it perfectly

In the additional comments, the general themes included suggestions that:

- The Code of Ethics doesn’t address this well, but it doesn’t need to – it’s primarily a matter for school policy.
- The Code of Ethics is basically very good but needs ‘a tweak or two’ to reflect social media and contemporary health and safety requirements. (The need to update the code to reflect modern technology and social media was a strong recurring theme).
- A reminder that it’s a code, not a handbook – its job is to provide guiding principles
- Two participants suggested drug use was a more significant issue than alcohol in today’s environment.

**Q2:** The second scenario outlined a situation where a beginning teacher is asked by the Principal to provide additional care for a student who is having a difficult time coping with the separation of his parents. The student indicates he’d prefer to discuss it away from school and asks for the teacher’s mobile number so he can text her and arrange to catch up after hours
The survey cited three relevant statements from the current Code of Ethics and asked participants if they felt these addressed the situation sufficiently. The responses were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT FROM THE CODE</th>
<th>SUCCIFENT?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Learners:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.a) develop and maintain professional relationships with learners based upon the best interests of those learners.</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Learners:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.f) promote the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual well-being of learners.</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to the Profession:</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4.a) advance the interests of the teaching profession through responsible ethical practice.</td>
<td>63%</td>
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We also asked people to indicate overall whether the Code of Ethics provides adequate guidance for this sort of situation: 40% answered ‘Yes’, and 60% answered ‘No - more is needed’.

The general consensus from the responses above and the supporting questions was that the Code of Ethics addresses principles such as protecting the reputation of the profession and promoting the social, physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of learners very well, but is less helpful for navigating the specific issues and details of circumstances that arise.

It was suggested that providing more guidance for beginning teachers up front would be valuable (rather than ‘relying on [negative] media coverage...to get a sense of what to avoid’). Another respondent added: ‘The code needs to contain the overarching statements for the profession [but] the need for PD about various scenarios is critical.’

In addition to a number of comments regarding the inappropriate request of the Principal in the scenario, the remaining responses outlined two key themes:

i) **The code can’t cover every situation in detail and it shouldn’t try**
   - We MUST avoid a list of particular situations in any code.
   - A code of ethics doesn’t need to spell out scenarios. That’s the role of PLD. A code needs to provide guiding principles.
   - The Code of Ethics does not provide specific guidance for this situation and shouldn’t…the principal should manage this with the young teacher.

ii) **These issues raised in these scenarios should form part of ongoing PLD and practice discussions - a range of scenarios and discussion materials would be helpful for this.**
   - Younger teachers, especially those in secondary schools who are closer in age to their students, need to have very clear guidance on what is acceptable as a professional
   - You can’t do everything with the Code. There is educational material needed as well, quite a lot of it.
   - There needs to be better use of code in school level policy - or examples of expected behaviour - many principals and teachers I have worked with are totally unaware of the code and its expectations.
   - I think more is needed but not necessarily in these overarching statement - the scenarios and additional guidelines provide much of the additional guidance that is needed and perhaps there just needs to be more explicit pointers to some of this “second-tier” material.
   - There perhaps needs to be “guidance documents” developed that outline a wide range of scenarios and discuss these in an ethical sense for teachers to have exemplars of what the statements mean in a range of contexts.
Q3: The final scenario outlined a situation where one teacher at an ECE centre was withholding food from a toddler until they used the toilet properly, while another teacher raises concerns and questions the approach. The original teacher explains that this is what the child’s parents asked them to do.

The scenario raised a number of practice issues and participants were asked to indicate what guidance should be provided, and where, for these sorts of issues.

**Responses were as follows:**
(Note: people could select multiple responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF GUIDANCE</th>
<th>WHERE IT SHOULD BE PROVIDED</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>High-level principles and commitments for how we should treat learners, their families and other teachers</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear statements about inappropriate behaviours &amp; practices (withholding food, isolation etc)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear policies and direction for addressing specific issues and challenges among learners (toileting, aggressive behaviour etc)</td>
<td>24%</td>
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These results and the supporting comments present a strong view that the code needs to provide the overall guiding principles but that more specific situations and behaviours and best addressed in local policy, with further general support from the relevant legislative and regulatory environment.

- A code is an overarching guide for professional interaction... any list would always omit some things and could not fit all scenarios...it is the unpacking of the over arching statements that provides some of the most powerful personal growth
- If we as a sector deem it wrong to withhold food in order to gain compliance, then we should educate our families. It is about getting our parents to see the negative learning that can arise from such a situation.
- In general, the code should have more over-arching principles and guidelines for interpretation to avoid complex cases where the code is too narrow to apply effectively. Some specific, usually extreme, examples (such as physical punishment/assault) should be specifically covered in law and/or the code.
- I like the present code and like the role of the council in spelling out an ethical framework (autonomy, justice etc as overarching educational principles) rather than detailed practical policy. Practical policy issues are constantly being refined at a local level within schools.

Q4: Finally, we invited feedback on the way we are engaging with the sector through the development of the code – including what’s working well so far and also what else we could do to make it easier to contribute.

The responses included a lot of very positive feedback about the open and inclusive approach we are trying to take, as well as very positive comments about the use of surveys as a simple, brief, and easy to use way of providing regular feedback.
In addition to the positive feedback, a number of participants raised concerns about the number of teachers who are not participating in these processes and whether we were engaging other key stakeholders, such as parents. These comments also included a number of very useful suggestions for increasing awareness of these opportunities for teachers and others to engage in ensure their voice is heard. We are looking at how we might take these suggestions on board as we continue this process.

Finally, a small number of people remain cynical about the Education Council generally and expressed that openly, which we’ve reflected below. We want to acknowledge these opinions as well, and hope that we can continue to build trust and confidence with some of our critics over time.

A summary of representative verbatim quotes reflecting each of these key themes is included in an appendix at the end of this document.

NEXT STEPS

As indicated earlier, our intention is to run an ongoing series of surveys and keep testing our thinking and progress at each stage of development. We will run one more survey this calendar year – exploring some of the values behind the code as well as giving some thought to its potential as an aspirational and inspiring reference point for the teaching profession.

We want to respect the busyness and pressure that often goes with the closing months of the year for teachers, so during this time we will revisit all the feedback and suggestions you have provided and draw on these as we begin to frame up a draft structure and some initial suggestions for the content of the new code. We plan to test those initial thoughts with you again at the start of 2017 and then continue our iterative approach of testing and adjusting the content and structure towards finalising the document by July next year.

In the interim, we will continue to work closely with the Code Working Group as we review the feedback and begin to develop an initial structure and some draft content together. The working group is made up of representatives from every aspect of the profession, including early childhood, primary and secondary schooling, Māori Medium, the Pasifika Principal’s Association and others. (You can learn more about Code Working Group representatives on the [Education Council website](http://www.educationcouncil.org.nz).)

We also need to consider the most appropriate title for it and will be seeking your input on that as well.

Hopefully that answers any questions regarding the remaining process and overall timeframes. We will also give some thought to the other key issues raised in the feedback here (such as engaging with parents and other non-teaching stakeholders) and let you know how they will be incorporated into our approach.

Thank you once again for taking the time and being so open and candid in your feedback and responses. The final product will be directly influenced by your input.

We look forward to continue the dialogue process together.
APPENDIX ONE: ADDITIONAL VERBATIM QUOTES

We’ve provided a selection of comments and quotes from the responses under each of the themes that reflect they key points that were made regarding the approach that is being taken to engage with the profession in this process.

Positive feedback about the opportunity to engage and the use of ongoing, brief surveys:

- The level of consultation is superb. It’s hard to imagine how much easier it could have been made.
- It’s easy to contribute as & when time allows.
- I appreciate the open and inclusive approach you have taken, enabling educators to have a say through the ongoing surveys. I also really appreciated the breakdown of the results from the last survey.
- I am pleased that the code is being looked at but I’m more pleased that teacher voice is being considered. Not only that but teachers from a wide range of backgrounds and areas.
- Short, regular, focused surveys such as this one would make me want to contribute again.
- This was a good clear survey. Plenty of depth of thinking but quick and easy to complete. Thanks!
- It was good to get an opportunity to contribute this way. It makes the code a living document when it is reviewed/discussed.
- It can be done in my own time. It also is though provoking and has given my team some solutions to issues that may arise in our centre.
- I like the fact that you are consulting and that finally we are getting to the nuts and bolts and not just nebulous aspirational language.
- It’s great to see you asking some of the ‘hard’ questions that are often not spoken about or addressed. This will help open up these often not spoken about topics for staff room discussions.
- I appreciate being able to share my thoughts, and that the surveys are not too long. I also like the way you have summarised the first lot of consultation, it shows that our thoughts and ideas have been taken on board, and are respected.
- As a critic and skeptic when the council was first formed I’m heartened by the measure of independence and common sense that is emerging in policy statements and this process. We just may end up with something that is genuinely useful and positive for the profession.
- It has also highlighted the need to create a more robust code of ethics.

Concerns about those who aren’t engaging in the process:

- How have you enabled parents/wider whanau to have a voice (I only found out about it through the Highlighter’s newsletter and do not expect many parents to receive this)?
- I am concerned that less than 1000 responses were received from the entire teaching profession. I came across the link to this survey by change when I scanned through "The Highlighter". If you don’t subscribe to this you probably don’t know about this process. If it was supported by Principals, completion of the survey could be done in staff meetings.
- Maybe you have an overview/ process for how you want to develop the code in stages, you said you wanted to take the time to do this, could you share this with us or at least the key points and an approximate time frame?
- This is the first I have been aware of it - hence I think more publicity is needed.
- Very inclusive if you know about it...are there links through a range of networks to bring teachers here?
- You have adopted a good process. My only concern is that I am not certain that the focus groups are across a broad enough range of areas - e.g. city vs rural; different types of schools and ECE’s; experienced vs young teachers.
- It has been wonderful to have the opportunity to be part of these surveys. I thought it was disappointing only 900 odd responses. This is a concern for us as professionals....apathy?

General cynicism regarding the Education Council:

- As with most surveys, the questions seem slanted to gain a required outcome.
- Please consult practitioners that are not government appointees, in particular, the national professional bodies that represent teachers and promote the profession’s best practises.
- I think the focus aim and intent is all crazy we are being destroyed by the minister and ministry and you fiddle over faddle and piddle...
- Let people know about the surveys, ask people other than your friends, construct surveys that look for people’s views not ones with only responses acceptable to you.
- The survey felt more like an online interrogation than a simple survey. The questions, scenarios and answers show a bias towards a desired outcome.
• You are not really co constructing - but telling us still
• The EC and TC really have no idea what goes on in classrooms: student behaviour and engagement are the main issue, not teacher conduct!
• Process so far: adequate with opportunity for comment. There is no belief that it will make a difference. Consultation seldom means change when an organisation has an agenda. Trust is continuously being eroded yet we carry on in hope.

Specific ideas and suggestions for engaging a greater number of people in the process:
• Mailing list?
• I found this survey on social media via a friend. Facebook and Twitter reminders
• I find teachers skim read emails and often don’t pick up that surveys or feedback is requested - not sure how to overcome this - but lots of coverage via different avenues may assist
• Have more conversations around our Code of Ethics and come to a common ground of agreement. Maybe this could be a great workshop at the next NZEI TE RUI ROA.
• Where is te reo, professionalism, support bullying cyberbullying etc - i do support your efforts but...get on with it!
• Direct contact within centres. Being sent letters, emails asking for contribution.
• To get a random selection from across the sector and country there should be a number of survey responses from each school/learning centre. Could be sent by mail or links to admin to pass on to staff.
• To me the questions are really negative. Is there nothing positive about the code of ethics? To me it should be a document to be proud of and one that guides me to be the best teacher I can be. More positive scenarios are needed. They need to be our guide as well.
• Using different ways of communication, either post, text, email or phone call.
• The code should be guide phrased in positive language, and should not include examples of behaviour. The approach you are taking will only be meaningful if you use it to create a Code that uplifts and celebrates the status of the profession, rather than demeaning it by creating a prescriptive list of behaviours.
• Is there a link we can copy and paste to social media for colleagues in other sectors, so that they can access this survey easily? I wonder how many teachers actually make time to read The Highlighter.
• It would be good to have the opportunity to take part in focus groups but I am not sure how to access these or how to become part of them. I think it is really important that the code consists of broad statements and that the detail is up to schools and other educational settings.
• Please ensure the provinces are included in focus groups. Consultation is not about filling in ‘survey monkey’.
• One way to make this ‘real’ would be to advertise it at the workplace - at school. Through principals or flyers. The highlighter is good, but I worry it's disconnected with the workplace.
• Your examples are very extreme. These are clearly in need of policy. A more ambiguous case would be more useful to determine the interpretation of interested parties.
• Send out to schools the survey - maybe as a discussion starter in a Dept/staff meeting but time is valuable.

Thanks again to everyone who took the time to share their ideas, thoughts, feedback and suggestions with us. We are taking this on board as we prepare for the next steps in the process.