

Ethics in School Counseling

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Overview



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- **Georgia's Code of Ethics for Educators**
- **American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Ethical Standards for School Counselors**
- **Documentation and Records**
- **Confidentiality and Duty to Warn**
- **Behavior Choices**

Overview



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- **Mandated Reporting**
- **Subpoenas**
- **Tips, Tricks, and Best Practices**
- **Upcoming Webinars**
- **Helpful Links**
- **Questions**

Georgia's Code of Ethics for Educators



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- Applies to educators who hold certificates through the Georgia Professional Standards Commission
- Defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia through its 11 standards
- Provides guidance for protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of students and educators

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ASCAs Ethical Standards for School Counselors



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**Currently under revision

- Responsibilities to Students
 - Responsibilities to Parents
 - Responsibilities to Colleagues and Professional Associates
 - Responsibilities to Schools, Communities, Families
 - Responsibilities to Self
 - Responsibilities to Profession
 - Maintenance of Standards
- Act in the best interests of the student clients at all times. Act in good faith and in the absence of malice.
 - Function within the boundaries of personal competence. Be aware of personal skill levels and limitations.
 - Be able to fully explain why you do what you do. A theoretical rationale should undergird counseling strategies and interventions.
 - Consult with other professionals (colleagues, supervisors, counselor educators, professional association ethics committee, etc.) Have a readily accessible support network of professionals.
 - Stay up-to-date with laws and current court rulings, particularly those pertaining to counseling with minors.

Confidentiality and Duty to Warn



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Confidentiality is a professional's promise or contract to respect clients' privacy by not disclosing anything revealed during counseling, except under certain conditions.



Confidentiality and Duty to Warn



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Counselors

- Consult with other educators, who may not have the same obligations regarding the student's privacy. While minimal disclosure might be recommended, it is not always possible to do so.

Teachers

- Need to be informed about the special needs and circumstances of the student since teachers are often in the best position to have a positive impact on students during and beyond the school day.

Confidentiality and Duty to Warn



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Administrators or Other Student Services Personnel

- May request information about counseling sessions for appropriate reasons.

Parent(s) and Guardian(s)

- Are interested in knowing what was discussed during the counseling session.

Confidentiality and Duty to Warn



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Clear or Imminent Danger (Students in Crisis)

- Determine the degree of seriousness of the threat
- Notify the person who is in danger and any others who are in a position to protect that person from harm
- Reveal only essential information related to the clear or imminent danger

Example: Student A tells the school counselor that Student B has posted on social media his plan to commit suicide. The school counselor then meets with Student B, who confirms that he did post the information to the webpage. What additional facts would cause the school counselor to determine that Student B is in clear or imminent danger?

Behavior Choices



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- **Bullying and Cyberbullying**
 - O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4
 - School District's Bullying Policy
- **Other Risky Behaviors**
- **Correlation to Mental Health**
- **Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Communications**



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Mandated Reporting

- **Recent Amendments**

- O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 (HB 268, 2015 Legislative Session)
- O.C.G.A. § 49-5-41 (HB 177, 2015 Legislative Session)

- **School District's Policy and Procedures**

- Internal Reporting
- External Reporting

- **Non-School Hours**

- Emergency reporting numbers for afterhours, weekends and holidays

Subpoenas



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I have been subpoenaed. Now what?

Follow your school district's policy and procedures

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Tips, Tricks, and Best Practices



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- Lead individual and small-group counseling that encourages students to make positive behavior choices and accept responsibility for their actions
- Design and implement positive behavior and intervention support plans for individual students in collaboration with classroom teachers and other school behavior specialists
- Serve as a mediator for student-student and student-teacher conflict
- Coordinate and facilitate programs (mentor programs, peer support, conflict resolution, and anger management programs) to assist students in developing pro-social behaviors
- Keep informed of school, district, and state policies related to student discipline

Tips, Tricks, and Best Practices



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REFRAIN

- The school counselor sits down for a tasty school lunch at a table in the cafeteria and the following conversation takes place:
- Teacher: I am very concerned about the change in Nicki's behavior lately. She can't seem to concentrate on her work.
- School Counselor: Oh, didn't she tell you? Her parents have recently separated and are seriously thinking about divorce. They have asked me to talk with her.

IT'S HANDLED

- In response to a teacher's concern, the counselor could have a policy of saying, "Will you send the child to my office to see what I can do? Then I will get back to you."
- This response allows the counselor to obtain the child's consent before talking with the teacher in a **private place**. The counselor when talking with Nicki might say, "It's important that your teacher know SOME things about what is happening in your life so he/she can help you too. What are some things you would like to tell him/her or that you would like me to share with him/her?"

Tips, Tricks, and Best Practices



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REFRAIN

- The counseling secretary brings in some papers for the counselor to sign. The following conversation takes place:
- Secretary: I have seen Becky around the office a lot lately. She really seems to need to talk.
- School Counselor: Yes. I'm really concerned about her. The poor girl has just found out that she is pregnant, and we are trying to look at her options.
- Secretary: Do her parents know?
- School Counselor: Not yet. She's afraid to tell them.
- Secretary: I sure would want to know if it was my daughter.

IT'S HANDLED

- The counselor's response to the secretary could be, "Yes, she does come in to talk a lot. Teenagers seem to go through phases when they need special attention. Thanks for bringing these papers in."

Upcoming Webinars



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September

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Audience: High School NEW Counselors

Webinar Title: Understanding Career Pathways

Time: 11:00 AM

Registration Link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7100711330276082434>

Audience: Elementary and Middle School NEW Counselors

Webinar Title: Understanding Your Role in the CCRPI Data Collection Process

Time: 2:00 PM

Registration Link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3650302005314953474>

Audience: Middle School Counselors

Webinar Title: Student Leadership Programs

Time: 11:00 AM

Registration Link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4949181479485955842>

Audience: Elementary School Counselors

Webinar Title: Academic Achievement Initiatives

Time: 2:00 PM

Registration Link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5724960600160943106>

September

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Helpful Links



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- [Georgia's Code of Ethics for Educators](#)
- [American School Counselor Association Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#)
- [Questions to Expect When Making a CPS Referral](#)
- [Report and To Whom](#)
- [Division of Family and Children Services site](#)

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Questions



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*Thank you for your time and attention to this
important matter.*

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