

Real World Ethics for Facilities Managers

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What does “Ethics” really mean?

Definitions:

- ❓ Moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity.
- ❓ “Ethical dilemma” A situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two courses of action, either of which entails transgressing a moral principle.
- ❓ Are you responsible for recommending hires or purchasing goods? If so, YOU are a **LEGAL AGENT** for your employer



WASBO Code of Ethics

Professional School Business Officials shall:

- ❑ Adhere to local, state and national laws
- ❑ Accept responsibility for mastering, contributing to and sharing in the growth of specialized knowledge, concepts, and skills which are necessary to perform their duties



#1 Hiring Practices/Conflicts

A custodial applicant has been offered a position contingent on a background check, physical and drug test. Prior to completing this process the candidate disclosed to a district office employee that they recently smoked marijuana and worried about failing the drug test. The candidate is waiting in your conference room. What is your next move?

What NOT To Do

- ❓ Call the cops
- ❓ Leave the job offer on the table
- ❓ Give reassurances “It’ll all be fine, just take the drug test”
- ❓ Get into personal philosophy



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Potential Steps

- ❑ Consult HR
- ❑ Ask the prospect if they made the comment
- ❑ Look to your board policy - Drug policy?
- ❑ Consider state and federal laws
- ❑ Rescind offer in writing and site applicable policies and laws



#2 Bidding Conflicts

You are bidding out a flooring project and have a due date for the bids as April 3, at 3pm. You receive and open the bids publicly with two of the contractors. On April 4th you receive an additional bid from a contractor, via email, who put an extensive amount of work into the bid package. This contractor has the lowest bid of all the bidders. What should you do?

What NOT To Do

- ❓ Add the newest bid to the bid tab sheet and release results to all bidders
- ❓ Ask all bidders to sharpen their pencils and resubmit their “Best Price”
- ❓ Discard the most recent bid and ignore the contractor (Maybe it was held up in their outbox?)
- ❓ Award the most recent bidder based on lowest price





Potential Steps

- ❑ Ensure your RFP was clear on the due date and process
- ❑ Ask final bidder when they sent their bid package?
- ❑ Likely, disqualify the contractor for failing to meet the RFP requirements
- ❑ Respond in writing, citing the failure



#3 Confidentiality

You have an employee that was injured and needs to be out for a period of time to have surgery. Multiple co-workers of this employee have asked you for details about the situation. What should you do?

What NOT To Do

- ❓ Share all of the information you know about the injury, surgery the employee is having, and any other details you can think of, or have heard from others
- ❓ Take donations for the employee and congratulate them on their new kidney





Potential Steps

- ❑ Consult HR
- ❑ Plan to have a sub fill in for them if needed
- ❑ Share basic information about the length of time the employee will be away from work
- ❑ When they return, be sure you're able to meet any restrictions the employee's Dr has them under



#4 Investigations/Due Process

A teacher believes that items from her desk have been stolen so she sets up a private camera and finds an employee who works for your department taking items. You have worked with this employee for a number of years. What do you do?

What NOT To Do


- ❓ Get the items back that were stolen and tell the teacher that it was an honest mistake
- ❓ Ignore the situation
- ❓ Call the employee and yell at them for being an idiot





Potential Steps

- ❑ Depending on the value of items, notify the police
- ❑ Meet with the accused employee and ask open ended questions about the accusations
- ❑ Have a witness with you as you investigate
- ❑ Consult your policy/HR regarding outcome of investigation & punishment
- ❑ Possibly address teacher's behavior. Setting up a private surveillance system in her room may also be violation of your policy/FERPA



#5 Cash Handling/Petty Cash

You have an in-house electrician that did a sizeable project, and removed a large amount of copper wire that was scheduled to be replaced. When he finished the project, he came to you to see what he should do with the removed wire and equipment. What should you do?

What NOT To Do

- ❓ Cash it in and take everyone out after work
- ❓ Tell him to cash it in and if it's under \$100 he can keep it
- ❓ Tell him that as long as he doesn't tell anyone, you didn't hear or see anything





Potential Steps

- ❑ What's Board policy or your district's acceptable practice?
- ❑ Ask your Business Manager
- ❑ Have someone that knows the process be assigned to handle scrap
- ❑ If it's in alignment with Board policy, take it to cash it in, get a receipt, and turn all of the money into your Business office with the receipt



#6 Social Media

One of your employees is posting on social media during working hours. A board member is upset that your employee is using company time to post items for sale. What can you do?

What NOT To Do

- ❓ Tell your board member to take it up with the superintendent
- ❓ Text the employee that a board member is pissed at them for posting items for sale while working
- ❓ Set up a burner account and personally monitor your employee
- ❓ Suspend the employee






Potential Steps

- ❓ Meet with the employee to gain clarity around the situation
- ❓ Is this a shared account?
- ❓ Is this truly them making the posts? (JM)
- ❓ What time are they posting - is it auto generated?
- ❓ Are they indeed selling items while on the clock?
- ❓ Consult your policy or HR to determine any violations that may have occurred and follow through with discipline or summary



#7 Accepting Gifts



You bid out a project and proposals are due back today at 2pm. All proposals are received on time. As you're opening them for review, you notice that one of them has basketball tickets to an upcoming game. What should you do?

What NOT To Do

- ❓ Depends if Giannis is in the starting line up?
- ❓ Bring a co-worker as a “wellness incentive”
- ❓ Throw out all other bids, unless they can up the ante with Packers tickets





Potential Steps

- ❑ Make photo copies of the tickets
- ❑ Email the vendor your purchasing policy and ask them to return for the items
- ❑ Share what happened with your supervisor, in an email



#8 Evaluations

Your building supervisor submits all of their completed employee evaluations to you. You observe that all of his female employees at the school received glowing reviews, and the one male employee was marked terribly in all criteria. This is the first you have heard of poor performance out of the employee. What should you consider?

What NOT To Do

- ❓ Transfer the male employee to another school, in exchange for a female employee
- ❓ Ignore your observations
- ❓ Recommend the male employee for termination
- ❓ Recommend a higher raise for all of the female employees






Potential Steps

- ❑ Consider the leadership of the supervisor & anything going on in his personal life?
- ❑ Ask the supervisor for clarity around the ratings and any supporting evidence
- ❑ Complete an informal walk & talk with each employee under the supervisor's leadership
- ❑ Meet with supervisor and deficient staff member and collaboratively set up an action plan for improvement
- ❑ Ensure supervisor is being equitable in his ratings for all staff/re-train
- ❑ Ensure supervisor has completed all harassment/Quid Pro Quo training
- ❑ Evaluations are legal documents



#9 Avoiding Favoritism



You have an open Head Custodian position and only a couple of candidates applied - both are internal. One of the candidates is very qualified for the position and has gone out of his way to get extra training. Sometimes he doesn't share the same opinions as you do, though. The other is a close friend, has worked for the district for a long time, and has "served his time." He's shares the same perspective you do on just about everything. He hasn't done much in the way of professional development, but you really like him. What should you do?

What NOT To Do

- ❑ Give it to the candidate you're better friends with
- ❑ After the interview, tell you friend if he signs up for some more professional development classes right away, you could probably give him the job





Potential Steps

- ❑ Consult HR
- ❑ Use your process for hiring
- ❑ Get feedback from others on the interview team to determine the best candidate for the position
- ❑ Hire the best candidate for the position
- ❑ Repost if needed



#10 Double Dipping

One of your salaried employees works from 8am-4pm each day. This employee is also contracted as football coach for your school district. You observe the employee coaching football at 3pm during the work day. What should you do?

What NOT To Do

- ❓ Immediately dock their pay
- ❓ Email the head coach of the football team regarding your concerns
- ❓ Look the other way....after all, we are State Champs!





Potential Steps

- ❑ Check job records for the employee....Maybe they are starting earlier?
- ❑ Consider if they are accomplishing all that they are assigned
- ❑ Talk with them about balancing both roles and set expectations
- ❑ A salaried employee might be able to flex their schedule? What does their contract/handbook say?
- ❑ Will you allow everyone this same flexibility? (Church)
- ❑ If necessary, they may be disciplined for time theft?



Takeaways

- ❓ You will be confronted with an Ethical Dilemma at some point in your career.
- ❓ Reference your Board policy or the WASBO Code of Ethics when considering your actions as a good practice model.
- ❓ Seek selective counsel from your peers.

Questions?

