

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN TEACHING



A RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS



INTRODUCTION

This resource has been developed to support teachers and school leaders to reflect on some of the professional and ethical challenges and dilemmas involved in teaching and learning and develop their professional judgements and practice.

The resource has been produced by the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE), the professional body for teaching, with the support of teachers. It has been designed to accompany the GTCE's revised Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers ('the Code').

The resource encourages teachers and school leaders to consider how the principles set out in the Code can help them to tackle some of the professional and ethical challenges they are likely to face in their teaching careers. It also draws their attention to other important frameworks and guidance which support professional practice.

The resource comprises a series of scenarios, each accompanied by a set of questions. The scenarios provide teachers with an opportunity to explore common challenges and dilemmas, refine their judgements, and expand their repertoire of possible responses. They can be used individually, or in discussion with others.



How and why this resource was developed

The GTCE is responsible for improving standards of teaching and the quality of learning and maintaining and improving standards of professional conduct among teachers, in the public interest. It is the awarding body for qualified teacher status (QTS) in England and maintains a register of qualified teachers. All teachers (including supply and temporary teachers) in maintained schools and pupil referral units, and in non-maintained special schools, must be registered with the GTCE. Other qualified teachers, including some of those who work in the independent sector, choose to register.

The GTCE developed the Code with teachers and others involved in teaching and learning. The purpose of the Code is to guide teachers' everyday judgements and actions and provide the GTCE with principles to use in regulating the profession.

Since 2009, trainee teachers have also been required to be registered with the GTCE, on a provisional basis. Trainees are bound by the conduct element of the Code, only, until they achieve QTS, when provisions relating to competency also apply. Instructors and overseas trained teachers are also required to be registered with the GTCE on a provisional basis.

Teachers who took part in research that informed the development of the GTCE's Code said it would be useful to have some resources to help them reflect on the principles set out in the Code and consider how they can be used to support professional judgements and decisions. The GTCE worked with teachers and teacher educators to develop two resources to support the Code: this resource for teachers and school leaders and a second one for trainees and teacher educators (see www.gtce.org.uk).

When to use this resource

This resource comprises eight short scenarios, with accompanying sets of questions. The scenarios can be used to:

- help teachers reflect on some of the professional and ethical dilemmas and challenges that can arise in teaching, and refine their repertoire of responses
- explore differences between personal and professional values and judgements
- help teachers consider how to balance multiple accountabilities to different audiences that have a stake in teaching and learning
- remind teachers about the notion of professional regulation and the role of the GTCE in regulating teaching in the public interest
- consider how teachers can use other important information, guidance and support (including relevant school policies and procedures) to help them come to sound judgements and decisions.

There are a number of different situations in which these scenarios might be used. For example when:

- recruiting and interviewing new staff
- inducting newly qualified teachers and other staff
- refreshing the school vision, values or ethos
- developing or renewing school policies and procedures
- supporting personal development, enquiry or research
- reflecting on Core Professional Standards¹
- embarking on major organisational change – such as a merger with another school.

¹ In particular, C2, 'Hold positive values and attitudes and adopt high standards of behaviour in their professional role'; and C3, 'Maintain an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the professional duties of teachers and the statutory framework within which they work, and contribute to the development, implementation and evaluation of the policies and practice of their workplace, including those designed to promote equality of opportunity'.

How to use this resource

These scenarios can be used in a number of different ways. For example, by

- individual teachers, to support personal reflection and learning
- groups of teachers, to support peer learning and reflection and,
- potentially, by groups of teachers and other staff and stakeholders, to support whole-school learning and change.

After each scenario, there are four different sets of questions, which teachers and school leaders might wish to consider:

- questions related to the actions and motivations described in the scenario
- questions related to the deeper dilemmas and challenges raised by the scenario
- questions about the information, guidance and support available to help teachers to tackle dilemmas and challenges and exercise good judgement
- questions about learning for the future.

The questions are ordered in such a way as to encourage the reader to identify first their immediate reactions to the scenario, and then to work through a process to come to a more considered view. Although there are several suggested questions for each scenario, teachers are free to select those that fit best with the issues they are grappling with at any one time.

The purpose of the scenarios is to encourage reflection and debate on the professional and ethical challenges involved in teaching and provide teachers with an opportunity to refine their approach to managing difficult situations.

When working with these scenarios, it will be helpful to have a copy of the Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers to hand. [The Code is available on the GTCE website](#). For ease of reference, the principles of the Code that are particularly relevant are found after each scenario.

SCENARIO 1: TEXTING THE TEACHER

The scenario

A few months ago, shortly before the Christmas break, Sarah, one of Hannah Scott's pupils, had seemed very distracted. Hannah was worried about Sarah, so she spoke to her after class. Sarah had seemed very down. Hannah asked how things were going at home, and with her friends. Sarah said she'd had a fight with her dad the week before, but it had all blown over now. But she still seemed really upset. Hannah was in a rush, because there were so many things to do before the holidays. But she was worried about Sarah too.

Hannah knew from her induction meetings last year that she was supposed to report any concerns about student welfare to the school's lead on pastoral care, Mr Kirkpatrick. But he had just left for the US on extended leave and everyone else in the staff room seemed so busy. So Hannah gave Sarah her mobile number and told her to call if she had a problem over the holidays.

Sarah texted Hannah two or three times over the holiday and Hannah called her back for a chat. Hannah didn't think anything was seriously wrong; Sarah just seemed a bit lonely and down. Hannah mentioned this to Mr Kirkpatrick when he was back at school, in the second week of January.

Later that afternoon, Hannah received a request to go and see the headteacher. The meeting is set for this Monday and Hannah is wondering now if she made the wrong decision about how to handle the situation.



SCENARIO 1: DISCUSSION POINTS

Exploring actions and motivations

- What are your immediate reactions to the way Hannah has handled this situation?
- Why do you think Hannah decided to act in the way she did?
- What do you imagine the headteacher will say to Hannah?



Identifying dilemmas and challenges

- What professional and ethical dilemmas and challenges do you think are raised in this scenario?
- Would factors such as the age of the child involved, the level of experience or the gender of the teacher or the type of school make any difference to the professional and ethical dilemmas you have identified?

Making decisions

- With whom could Hannah have discussed this situation?
- What school policies or procedures might have helped guide Hannah's approach?
- Which principles of the Code might have helped guide Hannah's approach?
- What other information or guidance might Hannah have referred to (e.g. national policy frameworks, legislation, professional standards)?

Learning for the future

- Having thought about this scenario in more depth, can you think of any ways in which Hannah could have handled the situation more appropriately and professionally?
- Can you think of any ways in which the school could have supported Hannah to handle this situation more appropriately and professionally?
- Having considered this scenario, what would you do if this situation, or a similar situation, arose in your school?

CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE

The following principles of the Code may be relevant to scenario 1.

Principle 1: Put the wellbeing, development and progress of children and young people first

Registered teachers

- Use their professional expertise and judgement to do the best for the children and young people in their care
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people under their supervision
- Follow their school's child protection policies and procedures
- Establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their relationships with children and young people
- Demonstrate self-awareness and take responsibility for accessing help and support in order to ensure that their own practice does not have a negative impact on learning or progress or put children and young people at risk of harm
- Use appropriate channels to raise concerns about the practice of other teachers or professionals if this has a negative impact on learning or progress or risks harming children and young people.

Other relevant principles:

Principle 5: Strive to establish productive partnerships with parents and carers

Principle 6: Work as part of a whole-school team.

Can you think of any other principles of the Code that may be relevant to this scenario?



SCENARIO 2: A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

The scenario

Dartington Falls is an inner-city secondary school. The school has a new headteacher, Mr Khan, who is committed to improving the poor results the school has achieved in the last ten years. Mr Khan has recruited lots of new staff and put in place a system of regular peer observation. He hopes that this will drive up the quality of teaching and learning by encouraging teachers to support each other and become more 'reflective practitioners'.

To make sure all observations use the same criteria for assessment Mr Khan has developed a new observation framework. He hopes that the introduction of this framework will mean that, from now on, CPD opportunities are more carefully tailored to meet individual teachers' development needs.

Richard is one of the new teachers recruited by Mr Khan; he is currently completing his NQT year. Towards the end of his first term, Richard is asked by the head of English to observe Mrs Jones. Richard is nervous. Mrs Jones has been teaching at Dartington Falls for 25 years and Richard knows she doesn't think much of the new system of observation. He suspects she doesn't think much of being observed by a recent graduate either.

Just before the lesson begins, Mrs Jones provides Richard with a photocopy of a basic and well-used lesson plan. Richard observes the class. He thinks that Mrs Jones has a good rapport with the students, but her approach is quite old-fashioned. She seems to be ignoring what they've discussed in recent staff development sessions. She also seems to be unaware of much of the more recent research on the text the class is studying – research that raises interesting new questions about how the text should be taught.

The observation framework Richard has been given has space to record his observations about student rapport; there is also space to record observations about subject knowledge and resources used. However, it's not clear where Richard should record his thoughts about Mrs Jones' teaching being 'old fashioned'; there's nothing specifically about research evidence on the form. Mrs Jones and Richard have half an hour scheduled in their diaries later the same day for an initial discussion about the observation. Richard is feeling anxious.



SCENARIO 2: DISCUSSION POINTS

Exploring actions and motivations

- Why do you think Richard is feeling nervous?
- What are your immediate thoughts about how Richard should handle this situation?

Identifying dilemmas and challenges

- What professional and ethical dilemmas and challenges do you think are raised in this scenario?
- Would factors such as the age of the children involved, the level of experience of the two teachers or the type of school make any difference to the professional and ethical dilemmas you have identified?

Making decisions

- What professional skills should Richard be able to draw on to help him in his conversation with Mrs Jones?
- Who might Richard consult about how to approach this challenge?
- What school policies or procedures might help guide Richard's approach to this situation?
- Which principles of the Code might help guide Richard's approach?
- What other information or guidance might be relevant (e.g. national policy frameworks, legislation, professional standards)?

Learning for the future

- Having thought about this scenario in more depth, what would you advise Richard to do in order to handle this situation in the most appropriate and professional way?
- Can you think of any ways in which the school could support Richard to handle this situation as appropriately and professionally as possible?
- Having considered this scenario, what would you do if this situation, or a similar situation, arose in your school?



CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE

The following principles of the Code may be relevant to scenario 2.

Principle 2: Take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their teaching practice

Registered teachers

- Meet the professional standards for teaching relevant to their role and the stage they have reached in their career
- Develop their practice within the framework of their school's curriculum
- Base their practice on knowledge of their subject area(s) and specialisms, and make use of research about teaching and learning
- Make use of assessment techniques, set appropriate and clear learning objectives, plan activities and employ a range of teaching methodologies and technologies to meet individual and group learning needs
- Reflect on their practice and use feedback from colleagues to help them recognise their own development needs; actively seek out opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding, skills and practice
- Meet the requirements laid down by their professional body, the GTCE, to maintain their registration status.

Other relevant principles:

Principle 1: Put the wellbeing, development and progress of children and young people first

Principle 6: Work as part of a whole-school team

Can you think of any other principles of the Code that may be relevant to this scenario?



SCENARIO 3: PUPIL VOICE

The scenario

Harborough High is trialling a new approach to involving pupils in their own learning. The new approach is being piloted with Year 10. The approach involves much more group work and peer learning than is usual for the school. Pupils learn together, with support and guidance from the class teacher. At the end of each lesson, each pupil group reflects on how well they have worked together and what they could do to work more effectively in the next session. Each group is given a form on which to record the main points of their discussion. Completed forms are posted into a 'trial letterbox' and collected weekly. The school's senior management team reviews the comments and writes a report for the headteacher, to keep him up to date on progress.

Mr Green is one of the teachers involved in the trial. He feels flattered to have been chosen, especially as he is new to teaching, having recently left another career and retrained as a teacher. At first, everything seemed to be going well. But over the last four weeks, lots of problems have emerged. Some groups of pupils have had heated arguments about who is 'group leader' and others have split completely. Mr Green thinks that too much attention is now being paid to resolving difficult group dynamics, rather than to learning.

Mr Green doesn't want the trial to fail; neither does he want his colleagues to think he can't manage the new approach to teaching. So he decides to tackle the issue directly with one of the most difficult classes. The fundamental problem seems to be that some of the pupils who have been put in the same group don't get on with each other. Since this is a project about pupil voice, Mr Green decides to let the pupils organise their own groups and choose who they want to work with. This should get over the problem of groups falling apart, he thinks.



SCENARIO 3: DISCUSSION POINTS

Exploring actions and motivations

- What are your immediate reactions to the way Mr Green is planning to handle this situation?
- How might his decisions and actions be perceived by other people in the school?



Identifying dilemmas and challenges

- What professional and ethical dilemmas and challenges do you think are raised in this scenario?
- Would factors such as the age of the children, the level of experience of the teacher or the type of school make any difference to the professional and ethical dilemmas you have identified?

Making decisions

- With whom could Mr Green discuss this situation?
- What school policies or procedures might help guide his approach?
- Which principles of the Code might help guide Mr Green's approach?
- What other information or guidance might Mr Green refer to (e.g. national policy frameworks, legislation, professional standards)?

Learning for the future

- Having thought about this scenario in more depth, what do you think Mr Green should do to handle this situation in the most appropriate and professional way?
- Can you think of any ways in which the school could support Mr Green to handle this situation in the most appropriate and professional way?
- Having considered this scenario, what would you do if this situation, or a similar situation, arose in your school?

CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE

The following principles of the Code may be relevant to scenario 3.

Principle 3: Help children and young people to become confident and successful learners

Registered teachers

- Uphold children and young people’s rights and help them to understand their responsibilities
- Listen to children and young people, consider their views and preferences, and involve them in decisions that affect them, including those related to their own learning
- Have high expectations of all children and young people, whatever their background or aptitudes, and find activities that will challenge and support them all
- Communicate clear expectations about pupil behaviour to ensure disruption to learning is minimised and children and young people feel safe and secure.

Other relevant principles:

Principle 4: Demonstrate respect for diversity and promote equality

Principle 6: Work as part of a whole-school team

Can you think of any other principles of the Code that may be relevant to this scenario?



SCENARIO 4: MEETING NEEDS OR SPECIAL TREATMENT?

The scenario

After attending a national conference on equality, diversity and inclusion, the headteacher at Belton school, Mrs Lewis, decided to instigate a new system of support for boys from the Frampton Estate. Rates of achievement for boys living on the estate had been below average for some time. And over the last year, these pupils' already poor attendance levels had got worse.

Applying some of what she had learned at the conference, Mrs Lewis wrote to all the Frampton parents, inviting their boys to participate in an 'after school club'. At the club, the boys were encouraged to share their experiences of school life, and to talk about things that were going well and areas where they felt they needed more support. They were given extra tuition on particular subjects and could choose from a menu of other activities, including making a short film or going on trips outside the area. Each boy was given support from a mentor, who helped them with homework and to deal with issues like self-esteem and confidence. Mrs Lewis wanted the boys from Frampton to be more confident about what they were able to achieve.

In many ways, the strategy has been a success. Teachers report that the boys taking part in the scheme are doing much better in class. Most of the boys seem happier and more confident. However, Mrs Lewis has had a stream of complaints from parents of other students, complaining that this group of boys are getting special treatment. They say that the Frampton boys are really badly behaved and that the new scheme is just rewarding them for this. Some of the Frampton boys are also beginning to turn against the scheme, saying they're being bullied in the playground for being part of the group. Others are boasting about the film they're making or the recent trip they've been on. Mrs Lewis is unsure what to do next.



SCENARIO 4: DISCUSSION POINTS

Exploring actions and motivations

- What are your immediate reactions to the new scheme for the Frampton boys?
- What factors do you think might have motivated Mrs Lewis to develop the scheme in her school?



Identifying dilemmas and challenges

- What professional and ethical dilemmas and challenges do you think are raised in this scenario?
- Would factors such as the age, gender, or background of the children, or the type of school make any difference to the professional and ethical dilemmas you have identified?

Making decisions

- With whom could Mrs Lewis have discussed this situation?
- What school policies or procedures might help guide her approach?
- Which principles of the Code might help guide her approach?
- What other information or guidance might Mrs Lewis refer to (e.g. national policy frameworks, legislation, professional standards)?

Learning for the future

- Having thought about this scenario in more depth, can you think of anything that Mrs Lewis could have done differently to handle this situation more appropriately and professionally?
- What do you think Mrs Lewis should do now?

CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE

The following principles of the Code may be relevant to scenario 4.

Principle 4: Demonstrate respect for diversity and promote equality

Registered teachers

- Act appropriately towards all children and young people, parents, carers and colleagues, whatever their socio-economic background, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief
- Take responsibility for understanding and complying with school policies relating to equality of opportunity, inclusion, access and bullying
- Address unlawful discrimination, bullying, and stereotyping no matter who is the victim or the perpetrator
- Help create a fair and inclusive school environment by taking steps to improve the wellbeing, development and progress of those with special needs, or whose circumstances place them at risk of exclusion or under-achievement
- Help children and young people to understand different views, perspectives, and experiences and develop positive relationships both within school and in the local community.

Other relevant principles:

Principle 1: Put the wellbeing, development and progress of children and young people first

Principle 5: Strive to develop productive relationships with parents and carers

Can you think of any other principles of the Code that may be relevant to this scenario?



SCENARIO 5: VISITING ROBIN'S PARENTS

The scenario

Robin's performance at school has been going steadily downhill. Robin's teacher, Mrs Parker, has noticed that he seems increasingly distracted in class. Robin's been late handing in assignments, and his written work is full of simple mistakes. Other teachers have also begun to comment that Robin seems to be struggling.

Mrs Parker has tried to speak to Robin about these issues after class, but Robin keeps giving her the brush-off. Two weeks ago, Mrs Parker managed to get some time alone with Robin to talk to him about what was going on. After some encouragement, Robin said that his mother had been unwell for a while and had just been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. As Robin's father works away from home from Monday to Friday, Robin has become her principal carer during the week.

Concerned about Robin's progress and wellbeing, Mrs Parker has tried to contact Robin's parents. She has left lots of messages for them, but they haven't replied. Mrs Parker remembers that they didn't turn up for the last parents' evening either.

So on Saturday morning, Mrs Parker decides to go round to Robin's parents' house. She wants to talk to the family and see if they need some additional support. Robin's father answers the door, and Mrs Parker explains why she has come. Robin's father is furious. He says Mrs Parker has no right to come around unannounced and no right to pry into their family affairs. Mrs Parker catches a glimpse of Robin's mother, who also seems really upset and embarrassed. Robin is not home.

At school on Monday morning, Mrs Parker is called into the headteacher's office. Robin's father has lodged a complaint and the headteacher wants to find out what's going on.



SCENARIO 5: DISCUSSION POINTS

Exploring actions and motivations

- What are your immediate reactions to the way that Mrs Parker has handled this situation?
- What concerns do you think the headteacher might have?

Identifying dilemmas and challenges

- What professional and ethical dilemmas and challenges do you think are raised by this scenario?
- Would factors such as the age of the child involved or the difficulties they were facing, the level of experience of the teacher, or the type of school make any difference to the professional and ethical dilemmas you have identified?

Making decisions

- With whom could Mrs Parker have discussed this situation?
- What school policies or procedures might have helped guide her decisions and approach?
- Which principles of the Code might have helped guide Mrs Parker's decisions and approach?
- What other information or guidance might Mrs Parker have referred to (e.g. national policy frameworks, legislation, professional standards)?

Learning for the future

- Having thought about this scenario in more depth, can you think of any ways in which Mrs Parker might have handled the situation more appropriately and professionally?
- Having considered this scenario, what would you do if you were faced with this situation, or a similar situation, in your school?



CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE

The following principles of the Code may be relevant to scenario 5.

Principle 5: Strive to establish productive partnerships with parents and carers

Registered teachers

- Provide parents and carers with accessible and accurate information about their child's progress
- Involve parents and carers in important decisions about their child's education
- Consider parents' and carers' views and perspectives, including those that relate to their children's development
- Follow school policies and procedures on communication with and involvement of parents and carers, including those that relate to sensitive areas such as attendance and exclusion.

Other relevant principles:

Principle 1: Put the wellbeing, development and progress of children and young people first

Principle 6: Work as part of a whole-school team

Principle 7: Cooperate with other professional colleagues

Can you think of any other principles of the Code that may be relevant to this scenario?



SCENARIO 6: A DIFFICULT MERGER

The scenario

Eastgate Community Primary School and The Laurels Primary School merged a year ago, as numbers in both schools had declined. Josie White, the headteacher from The Laurels, was appointed head of the new school. Before the new school opened, Josie asked parents and pupils from both schools for their suggestions for a name for the new school. The idea was that the names would be considered by the new leadership team and the best suggestion would be chosen. In the end, the leadership team chose the name 'Little Hebden Primary'; Little Hebden is the name of the village where the new school is located, and where the The Laurels had also been based.

During the second term after the opening of Little Hebden Primary, the headteacher began to pick up on rumours and gossip about the new school. Staff, parents and pupils from Eastgate were saying that this had been a take-over, not a merger. Parents of children who used to go to Eastgate were complaining that parents of children who had previously gone to the Laurels looked down on them and their children. Teachers who had taught at Eastgate were arguing that their creative approaches to teaching and learning were being lost and that the policies and practices

of the new school were too heavily influenced by the very academic ethos of The Laurels. They said the friendly and caring community that had made Eastgate special was being left behind. In the staff room, ex-Laurels teachers and ex-Eastgate teachers sat in two separate groups. Even the school meals' workers were taking sides.

Some people were even saying that the process for choosing the new school's name had been rigged. This rumour seemed to have stemmed from discussions between teachers in the local pub, which was run by the parent of a child who used to go to Eastgate. One of the ex-Eastgate governors, who had not gained a position on the governing body of the new school, had written to the local paper making similar accusations. The governor suggested that by choosing the name Little Hebden, the new school's leadership team was trying to maintain an association with this well-off, middle-class area, and break the link with Eastgate, a troubled peripheral estate of affordable housing and old mining cottages.

The headteacher can see trouble brewing if she doesn't act soon. She's decided to bring all the staff together in the staff room to set out her concerns and ask for their suggestions about how to improve the situation.



SCENARIO 6: DISCUSSION POINTS

Exploring actions and motivations

- What are your immediate reactions to the way the merger has been handled?
- What do you think the headteacher might say to the other teachers at the staff room meeting? How might the teachers react?



Identifying dilemmas and challenges

- What professional and ethical dilemmas and challenges do you think are raised by this scenario?
- Would factors such as the age of the children involved, the type of school, or the nature of the local community make any difference to the professional and ethical dilemmas you have identified?

Making decisions

- What guidance would you expect the governing body of the new school to offer in this situation?
- What school policies or procedures might help guide the headteacher and the senior leadership team's approach?
- Which principles of the Code might help guide their approach?
- What other information or guidance might the headteacher and the leadership team refer to in trying to resolve this situation (e.g. national policy frameworks, legislation, professional standards)?

Learning for the future

- Having thought about this scenario in more depth, can you think of any ways in which those involved in the merger could have handled the situation more appropriately and professionally?
- What do you think the headteacher and the senior leadership team of the new school should do now to improve the situation?

CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE

The following principles of the Code may be relevant to scenario 6.

Principle 6: Work as part of a whole-school team

Registered teachers

- Endeavour to develop productive and supportive relationships with all school colleagues
- Exercise any leadership and management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive and fair way, and in accordance with contractual obligations and national standards
- Uphold school policies and procedures, and raise any concerns about the life or running of the school in a responsible and appropriate way
- Participate in whole-school development and improvement activities
- Recognise the important role of the school in the life of the local community, and take responsibility for upholding its reputation and building trust and confidence in it.

Other relevant principles:

Principle 5: Strive to establish productive partnerships with parents and carers

Can you think of any other principles of the Code that may be relevant to this scenario?



SCENARIO 7: WORKING WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS

The scenario

Since she started school, Nisa has struggled. Occasionally she has displayed a very explosive temper, lashing out at those around her, breaking things and sometimes hurting herself. Nisa has a learning mentor, who greets her when she arrives at school; her family also has support from local social services. However, recently Nisa's temper seems to be getting worse.

Mr Salter, Nisa's class teacher, took his concerns to the headteacher, and together they decided to ask Nisa's mother to come to a meeting at the school. At the meeting it was clear that Nisa's mother, Mrs Sahin, was under considerable stress and finding it difficult to cope with her daughter's behaviour. It was agreed to hold another meeting, this time including someone from the local authority's children's services department.

Following the second meeting, other professionals were drawn in to help. Nisa's needs were assessed using a Common Assessment Framework and a support plan was put in place. Because the other professionals involved in helping Nisa already had very heavy caseloads, Mr Salter was given the responsibility for being her lead professional.

Taking his role very seriously, Mr Salter attended training and got on with helping Nisa, with support from her learning mentor. He made sure he copied emails about Nisa to the

wider professional team. However, after a while, Mr Salter came to the conclusion that he would have to shoulder most of the burden of responsibility for her case himself. He'd done some research on anger management in the past, and his wife was an educational psychologist, so he didn't feel there was anything in the plan that was beyond him. Nisa seemed to grow more confident and less angry and Mr Salter was quietly pleased with the way he was handling things.

One morning, the headteacher called Mr Salter in to her office. She'd had a call from Nisa's mother, who was very cross and upset. She was claiming that the school was not working with social services or giving them the relevant information about her daughter. Nisa's mother said that the social worker who had visited the family the previous day didn't know anything about Nisa's assessment or the support plan. She demanded to know what was going on.



SCENARIO 7: DISCUSSION POINTS

Exploring actions and motivations

- What are your immediate reactions to the way that Mr Salter has tackled this situation?
- What do you think has motivated Mr Salter to act in the way he has?
- What issues do you think will be on the headteacher's mind?



Identifying dilemmas and challenges

- What professional and ethical dilemmas and challenges do you think are raised by this scenario?
- Would factors such as the age of the child involved and their particular educational needs, the level of experience of the teacher or the type of school make any difference to the professional and ethical dilemmas you have identified?

Making decisions

- With whom could Mr Salter have discussed this situation?
- What school policies or procedures might have guided Mr Salter's approach?
- Which principles of the Code might have guided his approach?
- What other information or guidance might Mr Salter have referred to (e.g. national policy frameworks, legislation, professional standards)?

Learning for the future

- Having thought about this scenario in more depth, can you think of any ways in which Mr Salter might have handled the situation more appropriately and professionally? Can you think of any ways in which the school could have supported Mr Salter to handle this situation more appropriately and professionally?
- Having considered this scenario, what would you do if you were faced with this situation, or a similar situation, in your school?

CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE

The following principles of the Code may be relevant to scenario 7.

Principle 7: Co-operate with other professionals in the children's workforce

Registered teachers

- Communicate and establish productive working relationships with other professional colleagues
- Ensure that they are clear about their own professional contribution to joint working, seeking clarification where this is needed
- Understand that in sharing responsibility for children and young people's wellbeing and development they should always act within their own competence and responsibilities.

Other relevant principles:

Principle 1: Put the wellbeing, development and progress of children and young people first

Principle 5: Strive to develop productive relationships with parents and carers

Can you think of any other principles of the Code that may be relevant to this scenario?

For this scenario, you might also wish to refer to the [Joint Statement of Values for Inter-Professional Working](#), which was drawn up by the GTCE, the General Social Care Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council.



SCENARIO 8: SUSPICIONS RAISED

The scenario

Everyone in school seemed stressed. Exams were looming, teachers and pupils were overworked and a bit snappy with each other, and as for the parents....

Cathy McLintic was providing cover for Jonas Fuller, a long-time colleague. Cathy could have done without the extra work. Still, Jonas had left her a well-prepared lesson plan and she knew the pupils well. In some ways she was grateful to spend some time doing something other than worrying about how to get her own class through the exam period.

While grabbing a quick cup of coffee before the lesson Cathy overheard a conversation between four or five of the pupils in Mr Fuller's class. They were talking about the questions that might come up in the forthcoming exams. Cathy thought she heard one girl telling the others in the group not to worry because she knew what questions would come up and what they needed to revise. Listening a bit harder, Cathy heard the girl boast that Mr Fuller had told her what questions would be in the exam.

At home that evening, over dinner, Cathy discussed what she'd heard with her husband. He knew Jonas well, and she wanted to get his opinion. Was she being overly-suspicious? Were the children making things up? Had she just picked up the wrong end of the stick? Jonas had always got good results; surely he wouldn't do anything to jeopardise his good track record. Cathy's husband told her not to worry; he didn't think for a moment that Jonas would do such a thing.

The following week, having worried away at the issue, Cathy heard another group of pupils talking about the same thing. This time she was certain she hadn't misheard what they were saying. So she decided to confront Jonas. He was dismissive of her concerns and full of indignation. Surely she couldn't believe he would do something like that! But something about his attitude was troubling Cathy. She needs to do something.



SCENARIO 8: DISCUSSION POINTS

Exploring actions and motivations

- What do you think has motivated Cathy to act in the way she has?
- What are your immediate reactions to the way Cathy has handled this situation?

Identifying dilemmas and challenges

- What professional and ethical dilemmas and challenges do you think are raised by this scenario?
- Would factors such as the age of the children, the level of experience of the teachers, the relationship between the teachers, or the type of school make any difference to the professional and ethical dilemmas you have identified?

Making decisions

- With whom do you think Cathy could have discussed this situation?
- What school policies or procedures might help guide her approach?
- Which principles of the Code might help guide her approach?
- What other information or guidance might Cathy refer to (e.g. national policy frameworks, legislation, professional standards)?

Learning for the future

- Having thought about this scenario in more depth, how would you have advised Cathy to handle this situation in the most appropriate and professional way?
- Can you think of any ways in which the school could have supported Cathy to have handled this situation in the most appropriate and professional way?
- What do you think Cathy should do now?



CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE

The following principles of the Code may be relevant to scenario 8.

Principle 8: Demonstrate honesty and integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the teaching profession

Registered teachers

- Exercise their responsibilities in relation to the examination and assessment of achievement and attainment in a fair, transparent and honest way
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in management and administrative duties, including in the use of school property and finance.

Other relevant principles:

Principle 1: Put the wellbeing, development and progress of children and young people first

Can you think of any other principles that may be relevant to this scenario?

