



INFOSHEET

Programs and Services



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Professional Relations Disputes

Introduction

In any group setting where individuals interact under sometimes stressful conditions, misunderstandings, confrontation and conflict will occasionally occur. Teachers are not exempt from these professional relations disputes.

It is absolutely critical that teachers follow the NLTA Code of Ethics in their relationships with colleagues. Of particular significance in this regard is the section on teacher-colleagues:

(ii) "A teacher does not criticize the professional competence or professional reputation of a colleague except to proper officials and then only in confidence after the colleague has been informed of the criticism."

Resolving conflict among colleagues is paramount to maintaining a productive and enjoyable working atmosphere. This Infosheet outlines a recommended procedure to assist teachers in resolving problems which arise.

Possible Steps for Resolving Professional Relations Problems:

1. When a dispute arises between colleagues, the teachers involved should meet for the purposes of seeking information. Sometimes it is advisable to ask a mutually respected colleague to impartially mediate and help bring resolution to the dispute.
2. If the attempts to resolve the problem locally have failed, a teacher may seek the assistance of the NLTA by contacting an Administrative Officer of the NLTA. The colleague who is the subject of concern must be informed by the teacher of the concern and that the assistance of the NLTA will be sought.

3. A member of the NLTA Administrative Staff will assist in attempting to resolve the dispute in a collegial manner in accordance with the NLTA Code of Ethics.

Professional Relations Disputes vs. the Discipline Procedure

It is important to distinguish clearly between disciplinary procedures and attempts to resolve disputes between colleagues. It is intended that each be distinct and separate and in no way sequential. If the assistance of an administrative officer has not been successful in resolving a relationship problem, only a written request can commence the disciplinary procedure.

Further Information

It should be emphasized that the primary purpose of the professional relations dispute mechanism is to assist members in resolving disputes or problems of a professional nature that occur between teachers before external mechanisms become necessary. It is hoped that such an internal mechanism can assist in maintaining harmonious working relationships among NLTA members.

Summary

Teachers should exhaust every effort to resolve professional relations disputes at the local level, carefully following the NLTA Code of Ethics. Any questions or concerns can be directed to an Administrative Officer in Programs and Services of the NLTA.