

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR THE ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Revised December 2000, December 2005

This document was prepared by the Ethics and Professional Practice Committee and subsequently approved by the Executive Board of the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists on December 7, 2005.

1. RESPONSIBILITY AND FUNCTION

1.1 The Ethics and Professional Practice Committee, hereafter referred to as the Ethics Committee, shall be responsible for developing and maintaining a clearly defined position for the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists (hereafter referred to as CASP) regarding the ethical and professional conduct principles to be adhered to by its members. The major area of particular concern to the Ethics Committee will be that of the protection and general well-being of individuals served by school psychologists in schools, private practice, and other public and private settings. The purpose of the Ethics Committee is: (1) to promote and maintain ethical conduct by school psychologists, (2) to educate school psychologists regarding NASP ethical and professional practice standards, and (3) to protect the general well-being of consumers of school psychological services.

1.2 The Ethics Committee shall inform and educate members of CASP, other professionals, and the general public about ethical principles of school psychologists as defined in the National Association of School Psychologists (hereafter referred to as NASP) *Professional Conduct Manual* with the objective of promoting the highest level of ethical conduct among school psychologists. At its discretion, the Ethics Committee shall also provide information and respond to inquiries regarding standards of professional practice. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that in situations where an individual school psychologist is being coerced to behave unethically, he/she bears certain ethical responsibilities and failure to take appropriate action (e.g., refusing to behave unethically) could lead to charges of ethical misconduct against the individual school psychologist involved. The Ethics Committee shall also provide information to the profession and the public regarding options for filing grievances regarding school psychologists' ethical behavior with state agencies, NASP, the American Psychological Association, and other agencies and professional organizations.

1.3 In all cases, this educative role is intended to be advisory in nature. Neither CASP nor the Ethics Committee will undertake any formal adjudication of ethical complaints. Such complaints and requests for adjudication will be referred to the appropriate state agencies and professional organizations.

1.4 Members of the Ethics Committee recognize that their role is an extremely important one, involving the rights of many people, the reputation of the profession, and

the careers of individual school professionals. They bear a heavy responsibility because their recommendations may alter the lives of others. Therefore, they must be alert to personal, social, organizational, financial, or political situations or pressures that might lead to misuse of their influence. The Ethics Committee shall seek to assure the responsible use of all information obtained in the course of its activities. The objective with regard to all individuals involved shall, to the greatest degree possible, be constructive and problem-solving, rather than disciplinary in nature.

2. SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

2.1 The President of CASP shall appoint the Chair of the Ethics Committee. Members of the Ethics Committee shall be appointed jointly by the President of CASP and the Chair of the Ethics Committee. Terms of service shall be one year in duration.

2.2 When conducting Ethics Committee operations, committee members shall consider applicable governmental laws and regulations, the *NASP Professional Conduct Manual*, the *CASP Operations Handbook*, the American Psychological Association *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*, and applicable best practices and professional standards documents.

2.3 As an affiliate of NASP, CASP endorses the *Professional Conduct Manual* of the National Association of School Psychologists and all CASP members are bound by those principles and by these procedural guidelines.

2.3 From time to time, and at the discretion of the Ethics Committee, as part of its educative function, the Ethics Committee may choose to publish opinions, positions, or case studies in *The Connecticut School Psychologist* or other venues.

3. PROCEDURES REGARDING EDUCATION AND REFERRAL

3.1 The Ethics Committee shall recognize and respond to all complaints and inquires from any responsible individual or group of individuals in accordance with these procedures. The individual(s) making the inquiry need not be a member of NASP or CASP. Anonymous letters and phone calls will not be recognized. Complaints by professionals that are judged by the Ethics Committee to be frivolous or revengeful may be cause for referral to appropriate state agencies or professional organizations for possible action against the complainant. In all cases, complainants will be encouraged to approach the person against whom the complaint is being made in order to attempt to bring the complaint to his or her attention and to effect an informal resolution.

3.2 The Ethics Committee shall require that the individual(s) provide a written inquiry before it decides whether to take any action. As part of its educative function, the Ethics Committee may choose to contact a school psychologist against whom a complaint has been lodged to facilitate an informal resolution to the problem. Such action shall be taken only upon receipt of a signed letter to the Chair of the Ethics Committee from the inquirer describing in detail the issues in question, and with the consent of the inquirer. At its discretion, the Ethics Committee may render a non-

binding written opinion in a letter addressed to the individual making the inquiry.

3.3 Also at its discretion, and with the consent of the inquirer, the Ethics Committee may reprint the letter in part or in its entirety (with reasonable protections of confidentiality) in *The Connecticut School Psychologist* or other such venues. Whether such consent is granted or not, the Ethics Committee retains the right to make reference to any cases it has reviewed (with reasonable protections of confidentiality) in *The Connecticut School Psychologist* and other venues.

3.4 Ordinarily, the Ethics Committee will not act on an anonymous complaint. However, the Ethics Committee is empowered to use its own judgment and to proceed on its own volition in an education and referral role when a situation arises that has the potential to injure CASP or its membership, or to adversely affect CASP's reputation, or that is clearly inconsistent with or destructive of the goals and objectives of CASP. Additionally, in those situations in which the individual(s) making an inquiry is involved in a hierarchical relationship (e.g., professor-student, supervisor-supervisee, therapist-client, etc.) the Ethics Committee may act on behalf of the individual(s) making the inquiry and keep the identity of the individual(s) confidential.

4. PROCEDURES REGARDING CASP MEMBERS DISCIPLINED BY AUTHORIZED ADJUDICATING BODIES

4.1 The Ethics Committee shall review the relevant record and may recommend to the CASP Executive Board that they expel from membership a member without further proceedings when it determines that one or more of the following actions have occurred:

4.1.1 A CASP member has been convicted of, admitted to, and/or pled guilty to a felony or criminal offense and the case is not under appeal.

4.1.2 A CASP member has had a practice credential revoked or suspended by a state, regional, or local board, or similar entity as a result of ethical, professional or legal violations, or a member has had his/her license revoked for ethical, professional, or legal violations by any licensing or certifying authority.

4.1.3 A CASP member has voluntarily surrendered or relinquished a credential or license to practice as a result of ethical, professional, or legal violations.

4.2 Expulsion from CASP shall be undertaken only where, in the judgment of the Ethics Committee and Executive Board, such action appears necessary for the protection of the public and/or of the profession of school psychology. A two-thirds vote of the Ethics Committee is required to bring the question of expulsion to the Executive Board and a two-thirds majority of the Executive Board is required to expel the member.

4.3 When the Executive Board votes to expel a member from CASP, the member shall be notified that he/she has sixty days in which to show good cause as to why he/she should not be expelled. Failure to respond within the sixty-day period shall

result in the final expulsion of the member without appeal. A letter to the expelled member shall be sent, notifying him/her of the expulsion.

4.4 Within this sixty-day period, the member may provide evidence to the Ethics Committee that shows good cause why he/she should not be expelled from membership. Upon considering this appeal, the Ethics Committee may exercise its discretion to either uphold the previous decision of the Executive Board to expel the member from CASP or change its recommendation and resubmit the question to a second vote by the Executive Board. A two-thirds vote is required by the Ethics Committee to refer the question to the Executive Board. A two-thirds vote is required by the Executive Board to confirm its previous decision to expel the member. No other appeal will be recognized and the decision of the Executive Board shall be final. The expelled member shall be notified of the Executive Board decision by letter.