Teacher behaviour is a key factor when it comes to ensuring quality education for all (Poisson, 2009). The way teachers behave has a direct impact on their interaction with students, parents, colleagues, and staff administration. Even more, students’ desire of attending school and learning outcomes can also be dependent on the way the teacher behaves and the class is conducted.

Some of the characteristics that could result in inappropriate teacher behaviour include teachers who conceive teaching solely as a job; with significant classroom discipline issues; with frequent attendance issues; who are not inclusive to students’ culture and diversity; who express bias and prejudice; who use gender-biased, discriminatory and/or incorrect language; who complete administrative duties during class instead of teaching; who ignore student and parents’ complaints; who present defensive, confrontational and controlling behaviour; and who do ‘not accept responsibility for what occurs in the classroom’ (Stronge, n.d.: 2).

The following strategies can be put in place to ensure adequate teachers’ behaviour.

**References**

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Promising policy options

**Establish and disseminate a code of conduct for teachers**

In complement to relevant statutory regulations regarding public servants, codes of conduct regulate teachers’ daily behaviour and practice. Codes of conduct have proven to be the ‘cornerstone of quality teaching and work towards excellence in education’ (Poisson, 2009: 13). Indeed, they can support the creation of inclusive, gender-sensitive, appropriate learning environments which foster the quality of the teaching and learning experiences for all, while hampering misbehaviour (Poisson, 2009; McKelvie-Sebileau, 2011; IIEP-UNESCO, 2010).

Codes of conduct concern all teachers, regardless of their status (Poisson, 2009). They must provide teachers with ‘self-disciplinary’, practical, specific, and clear guidelines (Poisson, 2009). Standards of professional conduct included in the code -based on ethical norms or values, such as honesty, fairness, integrity, commitment, trust and equity (for more examples see [**Annex 1**](https://policytoolbox.iiep.unesco.org/policy-option/teacher-behavior/#Annex-1))- provide operative guidance for teachers’ interactions and relationships with students, colleagues, school staff and parents (Poisson, 2009; McKelvie-Sebileau, 2011).

Codes of conduct must be context-based, available in all relevant languages, and concise. They should be two pages long and the companion documents which ‘include the rationale for developing the code and the description of penalty mechanism’ may not exceed ten pages (Poisson, 2009: 32). The tone in which the code is written is very important and should be composed of a mix of inspirational, prescriptive, and prohibitive tones (Poisson, 2009). Yet, research has shown that a positive inspirational tone is much more effective than a prohibitive one (McKelvie-Sebileau, 2011).

Codes of conduct are developed at a national or local level, depending on the context. Usually, a ‘core team’ is established to create the new code or review an existing one (a code must be reviewed every three to five years) (Poisson, 2009). The development of the code must be done through a consultative, participatory process, involving key stakeholders (McKelvie-Sebileau, 2011). Thus, the core team should be an inclusive, representative group of stakeholders including educational authorities, teacher union members, school heads and staff, teachers, parent and teacher associations, students and academics (Poisson, 2009). Before launching the official code, the core team must ensure a wider consultation of stakeholders regarding the draft proposal (Poisson, 2009).

To ensure its implementation, the finalised code of conduct must be adopted formally by national education authorities as well as teacher unions. The official adoption must define the legal status of the code (Poisson, 2009). It should be ‘binding for teacher accreditation and/or certification’ and must be signed by all teachers before starting to work (Poisson, 2009: 30).

To guarantee all relevant stakeholders are aware of and understand the code, a dissemination campaign must be established (McKelvie-Sebileau, 2011). This can be done by various means, including:

* ‘by direct communication (forums, workshops, seminars, etc.), mail, the Internet, newsletters, the print press, TV and/or radio,
* by means of posters showing the major elements of the code. These should be sent to, and displayed in, each school in the country, including remote areas.
* through the central, regional and/or local administration,
* through the teaching-service commission (if it exists),
* at teacher education institutes or teachers’ colleges,
* through inspection services’ (Poisson, 2009: 33).