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# School Savvy 3 Etiquette

**A** young, new superintendent wanted to encourage new relationships with key staff members, so he invited them to his house. Some of the older members arrived expecting hors d'oeuvres and cocktails. Instead, the superintendent was grilling in shorts in the backyard, with no shoes on. Each time the doorbell rang, he shouted from the backyard for the guest to “Just come on around.” They helped themselves to drinks from a cooler of ice. The informality was reinforced when their new leader announced, “Geez, can you believe it? I’m the supe!”

The Amtrak conductor on the Midwest line was announcing the opening of the café car to passengers aboard the train. “The café car is in the rear of the train,” he noted, then added, “Please keep your shoes on at all times when walking around the train.”

Older generations—who assume that feet remained covered in public—might be bemused by both scenarios. Millennials, conversely, might have a hard time seeing anything to be uncomfortable about. Different generations have different social experiences and expectations. What’s “common sense” or appropriate social etiquette to a Boomer may not be so for a Millennial.

Different generations have far different social experiences and expectations. They don’t always share the same norms and protocols. If the question is “What does it mean to be a professional?” the answer is, “It depends on your generation.” The bottom line in working together, however, is that etiquette really is all about making the people around you comfortable with your interactions with them.

So a few basic rules are always in order:

- Make eye contact.
- Be a good listener.
- Wait your turn to speak.
- Acknowledge when someone has spoken to you.
- Avoid negative body language.

After these basics, certain areas seem to be the main friction points among the generations. Getting clear around these areas allows everyone to be “two feet in the present” and aware of schoolwide practices.

These etiquette pointers may be the start of a written document that all can look to as accepted practice. Jennifer has used this set of topics as fodder for conversation with schools at the start of the school year, in new teacher trainings, in work with new teacher coaches, and with professional learning team leads as discussion starters. For Millennials who want to know what the savvy thing to do is and for other generations who might not have had anything in writing about these practices, a list can be a good start.

## TECHTIQUETTE

In one school district in Haslett, Michigan, a group of young teachers were friends and socialized. The teachers included both men and at least one young woman.

One night after the school year ended, the partying was heavy, a female teacher was passed out, and her colleague/friends wrote comments all over her body, some lewd.

Well, in this age of sharing, someone in the group also decided to take photos of the young woman. As social media will have happen, the photos somehow made the rounds—to students, to parents, to school administrators, and to the traditional media.

The teachers were not charged with any criminal acts, yet their behavior was outside the standards of their community, and they faced potential consequences not only administratively but in the opinions of parents and students with whom they then had to continue to work in a professional capacity. One teacher voluntarily resigned a coaching position.

The new ways in which technology infiltrates our lives call for savvier behaviors from each generation.

In a similar case recently with a young teen girl in Saratoga, California, the results were deadly. The girl whose body was defiled was so humiliated when photos were posted that she committed suicide.

## Social Media

As the examples demonstrate, casual and unconsidered use of social media has real and very human consequences. Educators need to exercise caution on social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, and so on. Students, parents—and potential employers—can and do check out pages and look at pictures that are posted.

Some teachers have been fired for their Facebook postings, raising questions of free speech, but not without lengthy battles.

Some general guidelines:

- Don't friend or follow current students on social media sites, including Facebook and Twitter.
- Be cautious about connecting on social media with parents of current students because of the possibility of perceived bias. Waiting until their student is out of your class shouldn't hurt a mature relationship.

- Don't post to social media sites during work hours.
- Never use technology at work to post.
- Avoid commenting about work on public media, particularly about students even in general terms.

One New Jersey teacher was fired after commenting in a Facebook post that she felt like “a warden for future criminals.” Spoken, the comment might have been passed over rather than passed on. Online, such comments take on eternal life. Social media makes postings impossible to fully erase as they are put up on other sites unbeknownst to the author.

Check whether your district has a policy about friending, messaging, or texting students. As of 2012, Dayton (Ohio) Public Schools had banned such interactions.

Missouri initially passed a law restricting teachers from contacting students through private messages on any social media site before repealing the law and then passing a measure mandating that all school districts develop their own social media policies by March 2012.

Many districts are passing policies about general postings on social media. In Florida, one high school teacher of the year was suspended from the classroom and reassigned after posting—from his own home computer on his own time—comments about same-sex unions. In 2012, Orange County (Florida) Schools reminded employees that “private use of Internet and social networking is not private,” and users should maintain their professional personas.

Bottom line: Follow your district's code of conduct, especially when using social media. If you don't have a code of conduct, consider creating one. Look to your state administrators association or local or state technology projects at departments of education for protocols.

## **E-mail**

*Addresses.* Before we even discuss e-mail content, consider this a school savvy comment about choosing an e-mail address: Keep it professional. What e-mail address do you provide for personal use? What does that address say about you personally? The school district likely will provide a professional address to use with parents and colleagues through the system server. But you may hand out a private e-mail address for records, human resources, or some colleagues whom you may want to be able to reach you outside of work. Be aware of the impression you make to a current or potential employer, a parent, or anyone with whom you have a more limited, professional relationship.

Some (real) e-mail addresses we have seen lately begin with:

- Kinkykate
- 15cats
- glassgurl
- Bunnielove

Your personal address may allow you to reveal more about your inner self, but it may not help garner you the professional reputation you want. If you feel

the need to express yourself descriptively for some audiences, consider setting up an alternate personal address that is less, well, personal.

*Content.* Find out the district's e-mail policy. Your district may limit what types of e-mails you can send through the district account. Be aware that legal precedent makes workplace e-mail and Internet access the property of the employer. In other words, you're not writing a letter in a sealed envelope. Your communications are open to viewing. In New Jersey, one teacher urging colleagues to join a political protest was found in violation of the district's e-mail usage policy and faced disciplinary action.

Consider this from the Medford (Massachusetts) Public Schools (2012):

"Don't put anything in an e-mail message that you wouldn't want posted on a bulletin board or used in a lawsuit or shared with the wrong person. Do use professional, courteous language that will not embarrass you later. People who may never meet you will be forming impressions about you based on the way you compose your e-mail messages. It's much easier to edit a message before you send it than to send an apology later."

Here are some tips on the *who* and *when* of e-mail:

- Reply within 24 hours, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Even then, a more immediate short reply explaining your unavailability is in order—acknowledge receiving the correspondence and indicate when you will be able to reply. Learn to use autoreply.
- If you need to RSVP to an event or a meeting in your district, do so within a day or two of receiving the e-mail.
- Be aware of the "reply all" button. You may be responding to everyone identified in the header—and others unknown who are listed in a blind carbon copy field. If you're not sure, simply hit reply (not reply all) and copy and paste recipients into the address field.
- Remember that anything you put in writing can be subpoenaed.
- If you have a strong feeling about an e-mail you have just received, write your response and save it to your draft folder. Wait 24 or 48 hours to reread it, depending on when you feel calmer about the situation. Ask a critical friend to read your response for tone. Edit, edit, edit.
- Always keep in mind who needs to know the information you are sharing. Should you cc: your supervisor, the principal, another administrator? Who needs to be "in the know"?
- Recognize that those in leadership positions—the principal, superintendent, department heads, mentors—are not your personal friends. Don't use the same tone and informality you would with your BFF. You may call your friends "dude," but some coworkers may not feel that friendly toward you.

Which leads us into more about the form of your e-mail content. Here are some tips on the *what* of your e-mail:

- Use punctuation. Capitalization in professional e-mails is also the norm. The audience *is* educators.

- Proof your writing to catch typos, wrong or missing words, and grammatical errors.
- Use clear subject lines. Do *not* put names, especially student names, in the header. If you receive an e-mail with a student's name in the subject, change it to "Your student" before you hit the reply button.
- Be careful of typing in all capital letters; some readers consider all capitals the equivalent of shouting. Use a colored or bolded font for emphasis instead.
- Begin with a greeting and reiterate the topic or question. The recipient might have forgotten the initial e-mail and be confused as to what a "yes" or "no" refers to. Try, "Hello . . . nice to hear from you . . . with regard to your invitation/concern/assignment. . . ."
- Less is more. Shorter is almost always better in e-mail exchanges.
- Limit the number of topics. If you include multiple points, you may not get everything addressed in the response.
- If you receive an e-mail with multiple questions, respond in a colored or bolded font directly below each question.
- If your e-mail is lengthy or deals with multiple topics, consider whether e-mail is the best medium for communication. Voice or face-to-face interaction might be an easier, more efficient way to communicate in this instance.

## Texting

Texting has become a common communication mode, and the etiquette around the newest communication form may not be written yet in *Emily Post* (an old-fashioned guide to manners).

A Traditionalist we know recently discovered texting. He took to it as a regular form of communication, texting thank-you notes and other routine information at random times during the workday. He didn't understand what younger generations intuitively know—texts are for questions or information prompts that you need or expect a response to, not information. If it's information, use e-mail.

A Boomer colleague, conversely, preferred to get an e-mail in advance to set up conversations. She did not like impromptu phone calls.

For colleagues you may need to have ongoing communication with, you might ask them how they prefer to be contacted—face, phone, e-mail, text.

## Personal Media Players

Leave your ear buds out when you're at work and in social situations. You want to appear accessible and not like you're trying to tune out those around you.

## DRESS CODE

Jennifer heard about a principal, who, at the start of the school year, gathered faculty members in a meeting. "Stand up and say, 'Hallelujah!'" she told them,

raising her arms in the air. Faculty members imitated her, dutifully repeating, “Hallelujah.” As their arms went up, the principal stopped them with a “Freeze!”

You can probably guess what came next. She asked them to look down. “If you can see any skin between the bottom of your shirt and the top of your pants, consider changing the way you dress for the classroom,” she told them. “And if you receive an e-mail with ‘Hallelujah’ in the subject heading, you will know what I mean and what you need to do.”

More parts of the anatomy are seeing the light of day, especially with the trend toward low-rise pants.

One principal had to explain to a younger employee that leggings are not the equivalent of pants. Another supervisor responded to the question: “Are bras required?” At least the woman asked the question.

Many Boomer women remember when pantyhose were not just a preference. In fact, some Southerners probably remember wearing pantyhose underneath their shorts for even a casual trip to the shopping mall.

While public schools could very well have a dress code for their students, a teacher dress code could be a contested item up for negotiation. With more critical issues such as health care premiums and class size on the table, most school districts aren’t writing teacher dress codes.

Some tips to reduce potential issues around dress include the following:

- Ask directly if the district *or school* has a teacher dress code.
- Read the student dress code and, by all means, do not break it.

Visually survey what your colleagues are wearing—and go for a middle ground. Some regions are more comfortable with tattoos, earrings, and casual footwear than others. Blend with colleagues, not with students. If you have tattoos, consider what they are and whether to cover them.

Think about limiting the number of piercings that are visible to students. You may not need all six earrings in one ear while at work. Could your tongue ring remain in only when you’re going out, rather than at school? In general, despite the fact that the footwear showed up at a White House reception, flip-flops are not work attire. Conversely, wearing suits every day in an environment where khakis and a polo shirt are the common dress isn’t going to help you.

## **Children and Pets at Work**

For some Xers or Millennials with young children, day care is a challenge. Extended family members may not be nearby, and after-school meetings can be an issue. The obligations continue, but the set-up for childcare isn’t always there. Although you may feel able to concentrate and more ready to work when your child(ren) are on site, that feeling may not extend to those around you.

A high school band director has two young children. His wife, who works in the evenings, is not available to be with the children. Because he, too, often has evening rehearsals, concerts, or other school-related activities, he brings the children with him and considers them a part of his extended band family.

High school band members and occasionally an available community member babysit in the back of the room.

Although Boomers and Traditionalists might react strongly and think, “Hire a babysitter,” Gen Xers are more likely to blend work and family life. The context of the community also plays a role.

Some trainers or facilitators have no problem with a child coloring in the back with a bunch of crackers to eat; others find it distracting. Some schools used to working with high-needs students regularly provide childcare for parents to come to school and extend the same consideration to staff.

For others, their pets are their children and they think nothing of bringing their canine companion in if they’re working on a Saturday—or even their parrot (really).

Consider:

- Does your district or school have a policy for situations that call for educators to be at a meeting or professional development opportunity after regular hours?
- Does the district have a policy on animals in the building? Some districts restrict any pets because of student allergies.
- Discuss childcare ahead of time with those running the meeting, recognizing that bringing kids to work is not always an acceptable solution.

## ABSENCES

Many Traditionalists consider it a point of honor to be able to say how many years they have gone without taking a sick day. When they retire, they often are able to leave the office months ahead of the official date by using their accumulated sick leave.

These days, younger teachers are using their sick days more often and using leave for a family vacation, to visit a boyfriend, or just to have a “me” day.

One Millennial hired in the fall shocked her administrator by announcing she was a bridesmaid in several of her friends’ weddings and would need to be off on those Fridays in order to travel.

The generations’ views of what constitutes sickness—whether it’s a 104-degree temperature or emotional distress—have changed.

Some schools may not have written policies, but instead have strong cultural norms. Be sure to find out how and when one can use days off. For example, ask:

- Can a day off be used before or after a school vacation break?
- Is there an expectation that educators avoid being absent on Fridays and Mondays?
- Is there an informal understanding of what is reasonable for using a sick day?
- How do we notify others when we are ill?

These issues aren’t an across-the-board understanding of protocol unless they are spelled out.

## MEETINGS

A new teacher was having difficulty making connections with colleagues in her school. She was a friendly, outgoing Millennial. She'd graduated from a university often considered as having the best education school in the nation, so she didn't think her colleagues were unhappy with her teaching skills. In fact, she thought her students were doing well and that her classroom was organized and working effectively. Yet in meeting after meeting with her grade-level peers, her comments were met with silence or someone turned to a different topic.

When the young teacher finally asked her mentor if her perceptions were off base, her mentor agreed to intercede. The mentor, a respected veteran in the school, approached one of the teachers for a confidential talk.

The mentor then met with the Millennial to offer some advice. "You may do better to wait your turn to speak—listen first to what the experienced teachers have to say and offer your thoughts after. Be careful how you phrase your ideas. Instead of saying, 'It's really stupid the way we . . . ' try saying something like, 'I've been trying out a new way of doing this and I think we can improve how we approach . . . '

"Even though you are very knowledgeable," the mentor continued kindly, "others feel like they have paid their dues, put in their time, and deserve to be recognized as having the experience and authority to take precedence."

Deference isn't an immediate response for Millennials or Xers. Boomers and Traditionalists almost expect it.

When it comes to meetings, working across generations can be a point of friction. Consider these points of etiquette that are more universal:

- Be on time to all meetings; in fact, for many in the older generations, early *is* on time.
- Bring what you need for the meeting—whether it's filled-in paperwork, your own pen and paper, or suggestions.
- Pay attention. Those leading the meeting consider it a sign of respect. Doing crossword puzzles, grading papers, catching up on the news on your smartphone will be noticed—however surreptitious you think you are.
- You can text under the table, but people will still know—and many will consider it disrespectful.
- Put your cell phone on vibrate. *If* you need to answer the phone, say, "Just a minute" and walk out of the room to continue your conversation. Avoid talking as you make your way from the table to the door.
- Avoid whispered sidebars during the meeting, especially with disgruntled colleagues. Negative energy is a virus.
- If you will need to leave the meeting, try to let the leader know ahead of time so your departure is expected.
- Watch your body language—eye rolling, sighing, shouting out, or giggling.
- Apologize if you think someone perceived you as disrespectful.
- Try to compose yourself if your mood is stressed or angry, and explain if necessary, without going into every detail.



- If you are running the meeting, have an organized agenda and keep on track, ask people to adhere to norms, and expect to have to manage conflict.
- Remember that you are working with colleagues, not your best friends. Your language should reflect that relationship. Don't ask personal questions unless the other person brings it up.

Groups with ongoing relationships, such as learning teams, may want to consider these points as part of group norms and set them up as agreements.

## WORKING WITH OFFICE/SUPPORT STAFF

The front office secretary may or may not have positional status in the school hierarchy, but veterans know she has positional power and can make or break your work life. Want an appointment with the principal? Need help from the maintenance crew? Need to find a place for your team to meet? Need the scoop on a parent who's coming to see you? The people in this position are the heart of a building.

The same thing is true for custodial staff. When the light in your room won't stop blinking or a child throws up on the rug, their goodwill helps expedite matters that can be important to your routine.

We heard one story that really pointed to how important it is for young workers to understand working relationships. A new teacher, who had grown up watching her working mother interact with a secretary, had an impression that all secretaries make personal appointments. One day, she approached the elementary school secretary and asked her to make an appointment for the teacher to get a manicure. The request was not well received.

Courtesy should be common. Noncertificated staff play a vital role in school operations.

- Do not condescend to them or treat them as your assistants.
- Say hello to the office staff when you come into the office. Make eye contact.
- Ask if it is a good time to review something you need or when they might have time to do so—their workflow may be different than yours.
- If you're requesting an item, to have something copied or to get something done, give explicit instructions for the task. Don't assume understanding.
- Be aware of school procedures. If all copying is done at 9 a.m., have your copying ready by then.
- Follow the proper channels. Do you need a supervisor's or front office administrator's approval to have a support staff member assist you?

- Consider priorities. You may need your light fixed and that is your priority. The custodial staff member may be on the way to clean up after a sick child in another room. Be considerate; people will get a sense quickly of who really needs a quick response when they indicate something is urgent.
- If you break something or take the last of it, let someone know so it can be restocked for the next person.
- Acknowledge everything they do for you. Be genuine in thanking them.
- If a request is not met or not completed properly, address it in an understanding, nonthreatening manner.

### Learning From Year 1 Teachers

In spite of our best efforts to be polite, friction sometimes arises. Some thoughts about the etiquette around conflict are as follows:

- If you are struggling with something or someone, talk it through with a coach, the new teacher mentor at the school, or a trusted colleague. Do not tell everyone in the lunchroom. Do not tell parents about it when they come to pick up their children.
- If you are going into a difficult meeting with your supervisor or the principal, bring your coach or a trusted colleague if you can.
- Go to the source whenever possible.
- When you need to talk to someone, approach that person. Do not shout across the hallway or the quad.
- Don't send a note or email with an attachment stating only, "How about getting this done?" The impression isn't a good one.
- Avoid having that difficult discussion in front of students.
- Students don't need or want to know about your conflicts with others.
- When discussing events, try to be general rather than naming those involved.
- Remember, those you talk about today may be part of your team tomorrow.
- Exercise care and caution about the time and place for addressing delicate topics—before school, after school, during passing periods.

*Source:* New teachers in Palo Alto (California) School District, 2010.

Etiquette is the grease in the engine, the asphalt on the road that smoothes the way to better personal interactions with others in the workplace. Although we can choose those with whom we spend time outside of work, we have to make relationships work at school. By recognizing generational differences in approach and discussing norms, we can come to a greater understanding of what works—and how we can communicate better, the topic for Chapter 4.

## ACTIVITY 1

## Raise Your Hand

**Objective:** To begin to recognize the differences among generations' views of etiquette in a lighthearted way.

**Time:** 15 minutes.

**Materials:** A copy of the worksheet for a facilitator.

**Directions:**

1. Read each statement aloud, asking group members to raise their hands when they hear the response they agree with.
2. Allow group members to discuss and come to agreement on answers. Group members should be ready to discuss how their generational viewpoint informs their responses and to suggest common ground.

**Questionnaire**

1. RSVP means:
  - a. It's a party!
  - b. Let the host know if you can't make it.
  - c. Let the host know whether you can or can't make it.
2. Your e-mail address ends in @aol.com. You're most likely a:
  - a. Millennial.
  - b. Gen Xer.
  - c. Boomer.
3. Emily Post was:
  - a. An arbiter of good manners.
  - b. A former principal that everybody loved.
  - c. A television talk show host.
4. You open your e-mail from a colleague and the salutation is "Dude!"
  - a. You make a mental note to call your colleague aside and point out the lack of manners.
  - b. You get irritated and have trouble reading the rest of the message.
  - c. You don't see a problem here. In fact, you sign your return message "Dudette."
5. You have to set up a meeting with your small group.
  - a. You text everyone to see when they're available.
  - b. You send an e-mail with a link to a scheduling tool.
  - c. You see everyone during the course of a day anyway, so you just ask.

6. You're scrolling education blogs online when you happen across one written by a colleague. The blog is full of details about situations in your school, although no names are attached.
  - a. You feel that your privacy has been violated and vow to bring this up to the group.
  - b. You think, "Wow! I wish I was blogging, too!"
  - c. You review the school's policies and procedures to determine whether blogging information like this is against the rules.
7. You have a colleague who makes you feel bad whenever you work together.
  - a. You write an e-mail to the person about the situation and copy your supervisor on it.
  - b. You begin avoiding the person and try not to be in work groups with her.
  - c. You call the person aside and explain your perception, asking her to help find ways that your relationship can feel more collegial.
8. Your daughter's dance school is selling pizza kits to raise money for an outing.
  - a. You help your daughter solicit family and friends and keep the form at home.
  - b. You bring the fundraising form to work and post it in the teachers lounge.
  - c. You send your daughter in to work one day and have her sell kits to the entire department.
9. It's 4 p.m., the end of the contract day, and the staff meeting is still going.
  - a. You look at your watch and pointedly pack your things in case the principal hasn't noticed the time.
  - b. You leave—your workday is done and you have things to do at home.
  - c. You don't even notice the time; there's work to be done and you'll be there to do it.
10. Your group has been pretty down lately.
  - a. You suggest a party at your place.
  - b. You propose that the team dig a little deeper into what members can do to improve.
  - c. You urge everyone to get some down time.

- Discuss your answers as a group. Which generations were more likely to choose which responses? What does that tell you about the generational viewpoints?
  - For an added challenge, in pairs, try writing several questions of your own. Put on different generational lenses and see if you can foresee possible responses. Test your questions with the group.
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## ACTIVITY 2

## Etiquette in the Workplace

**Objective:** To understand the different viewpoints among generations and openly discuss workplace norms of etiquette.

**Time:** 30 to 45 minutes, depending on group size.

**Materials:** A copy of the scenarios for each group member.

**Directions:**

1. Share a copy of the scenarios with each group member.
2. Working in small groups of two or three, read each scenario and discuss how different generations might view the situation.
3. Answer:
  - How would each generation be likely to react in this situation?
  - How might the other generations respond differently?
  - Should the situation be handled differently?
  - What is the most appropriate response in this situation for those involved?
4. Share thoughts and ideas with the large group.
5. As a group, discuss other situations that may have arisen in your own workplace. Share ideas about how generations might view the situation differently and the best common solution to create an environment comfortable for all.
  - A student teacher is very technologically savvy. He has helped his mentor teacher considerably with new ways to use the digital whiteboard and with accessing Internet resources. The intern is continuously checking his smartphone for tweets and updates his social media site from the teacher's desk as his mentor teaches. When the mentor suggested that the intern turn off his phone, he put the ringtone on vibrate.
  - The retired teacher has returned part time to coach new teachers at the school. She is knowledgeable and has decades of experience and wisdom to share. In fact, she taught with many of the staff currently at the school who all are comfortable with and like her. The new teachers respect her. One habit, however, is bothering them. The coach regularly looks over their lesson plans to provide feedback. She often turns back their papers to them with editing marks in red pen, circling grammar or spelling errors and typos.
  - The central office administrator, dressed in a 1960s-style long, flowered, tiered skirt, sandals, and drawstring blouse, was explaining the state credentialing program to newly hired staff members. She presented slides and handouts of carefully outlined steps. This was a process of which she was particularly proud, since she had served as a member of the statewide committee that drafted the policies and procedures. As some new teachers began questioning the rationale behind specific steps, the administrator grew obviously more flustered. Some of the new teachers began to perceive her as defensive, even bordering on hostile.
  - A new kindergarten teacher was very hands-on. She regularly could be seen working on the floor with children or kneeling or bending down beside them. Because the teacher wore pants that

tended to be the low-cut fashion, adults and children alike regularly got a full view of thong underwear as she worked. She also often declined to wear a bra. She told her friends she didn't think it showed and she was more comfortable without one.

- The mentor assigned to a first-year teacher was known for reaching even the most at-risk students and helping them to succeed. The new teacher was excited about what she might learn from this mentor. The mentor teacher began the year by setting up particular times she would meet with the new teacher and specified that she preferred e-mail communication between those meetings. The new teacher often had questions or situations that arose. She e-mailed the mentor regularly. The mentor replied as quickly as she could, sometimes within one or two days. She did not check her e-mail after 4 p.m., she explained, because she had responsibilities both to young children and aging parents.

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**ACTIVITY 3**

**Generational Norms**

**Objective:** To come to a common set of workplace norms around matters of etiquette.

**Time:** 30 minutes.

**Materials:** A copy of the worksheet for each group member, pens, or pencils.

**Directions:**

1. Have each group member circle the answer to each question on the worksheet.
2. Divide into generations.
3. Average the response for each question.
4. Average the response from the whole group for each question.
5. Note how far generations differed from the mean. Discuss patterns: Where are the greatest differences? How do different generations define terms such as “personal information” or “formal”?
6. Work to create common ground.
7. Add statements if group members raise other issues that may be important to the group.
8. Form a set of written norms if the group deems it appropriate.

**SCALE** (1) Very important (2) Moderately important (3) Not very important (4) Unimportant

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Colleagues should be dressed in business attire, i.e., skirt or slacks, nice shirt, dress shoes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Good opinions are based on experience.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. People in collaborative/professional groups wait their turns to speak.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. We should address one another more formally, with Ms., Mr., Mrs., or Miss.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Tattoos and piercings must be covered up in professional settings.                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Everyone is on time to the meeting.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. No one texts, e-mails, or does outside work during the meeting.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. We use Standard English in our speech and avoid slang and swear words.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. We share information about our personal lives.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. We don't shout, cry, or exhibit strong emotions in front of colleagues in the workplace.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. We are well groomed.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. We avoid discussing politics and religion at work.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. We are able to bring our children to school when we have after-school meetings and can't arrange childcare.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. We use our sick days only when we are extremely ill.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. We avoid using personal days on Fridays and Mondays.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. We can have our pets with us if it's after hours and we have to work late.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. We don't post anything on social media websites that is outside the moral norms for our community.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. We avoid borrowing supplies from one another except in rare circumstances.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. We greet one another when we see each other in the morning using eye contact and a verbal greeting.               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. We use Standard English and spelling in our e-mails and written communications to one another.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. We report it when we use the last of any supplies that the school provides so that the supplies can be reordered. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. Our contact with students remains professional inside and outside of school.                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. We leave the workroom, staff lounge, shared classroom, or other shared space tidy.                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
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## ACTIVITY 4

## School Savvy Considerations

**Objective:** To generate open discussion of generational differences around workplace norms and come to agreement on some matters of etiquette.

**Time:** Approximately 1 hour.

**Materials:** A copy of the worksheet for each group member, pens or pencils, and scratch paper for notes.

**Directions:**

Use these bullet points to generate group discussion around generational differences and the expected norms for your site with regard to each issue. An experienced facilitator should help to guide the discussion. Avoid references to any individual or specific situations to avoid personal conflict.

Ask group members to think about how a school might frame the norms around these topics. What needs to be put into writing? What doesn't? What other challenges have you noticed that you wish had been officially discussed or agreed to?

- *Boundaries with students*
  - Talking about students in front of other students
  - Talking with them appropriately in the hallways or on the campus
  - Talking to students about other teachers
  - Talking to students when they are disrespectful of other teachers
- *Boundaries with colleagues and parents*
  - Talking in the bathroom, the parking lot, the lunchroom
  - Talking in the grocery store, at a party, in the community
- *Classroom sharing*
  - Materials, space, cleanliness
- *Curriculum and materials*
  - Returning equipment (video cameras, calculators)
  - Using someone's personal property
  - Textbook sharing
  - Keeping things organized
- *Absences*
  - Leaving clear sub plans
  - Expectations of others covering classes for you
  - Personal days, sick days—How many? How often?
- *Thinking aloud in front of certain audiences*
  - Who is your ally? Your critical friend?
  - Who can you vent to? Cry in front of? Who can't you vent to?
  - Considering political beliefs, tolerance of others' points of view

- *Family and pets*
    - Bringing pets and children to work or meetings. Are policies in place?
    - What is legal?
    - What is appropriate?
  - *Taking a leave or being released*
    - Sharing info about a leave/pregnancy/change of employment status
    - How to talk about it, with whom, and when
  - *Categories for which one needs interpersonal and school savvy*
    - Time: What is late?
    - Space: Where is your space versus others? Interpersonal, classroom, etc.
    - Keeping your word: What is non-negotiable and required versus a maybe
    - Sharing personal information, such as family or medical issues
    - Emotional expression: What are the boundaries? Can you cry? Yell?
    - Manners/courtesy/noise levels: What is loud?
    - Food: Sharing it? Bringing it?
    - Language use: Are slang or swearing acceptable?
    - Hygiene
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