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Work Ethics It's OK. I Work Here.

CTAE-FS-9 Ethics and Legal Responsibilities: Learners commit to work ethics, behavior, and legal responsibilities in the workplace. Used with permission of Career Solutions Publishing

Understanding and Goals

Unit Understandings, Themes, and Concepts:

Enduring Understandings:

Students will learn how to use their employee benefits fairly and ethically.

Employee benefits are designed to be rewards for good job performance and not as rights the employees are entitled to. Employees should do their best to not take advantage of employee benefits or abuse their privileges.

Primary Learning Goals:

Essential Questions:

- How should you treat your employee benefits?
- How might the way you use your benefits impact how your employer views you?

Students with disabilities:

For students with disabilities, each instructor should refer to the student's IEP to be sure that the accommodations specified in the IEP are being provided within the classroom setting. Instructors should also familiarize themselves with the provisions of Behavior Intervention Plans that may be part of a student's IEP. Frequent consultation with a student's special education instructor will be beneficial in providing appropriate differentiation within any given instructional activity or requirement.

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CSP Mini-Lesson 7, Spring 2008

Mini-Lesson Standards: (1) Identify problems, consequences and alternative solutions. (2) Use critical thinking to resolve problems. (3) Demonstrate dependability and responsibility.

Mini-Lesson Correlations: Problem solving, critical thinking, employer expectations, writing skills

It's OK. I Work Here.

Sandra was hired for a job at the Mesquite Grille, the local BBQ Restaurant. She loves the job because she gets great pay, a free space in a nearby parking lot, and 50% off meals at the restaurant. She gets one sick day every two months and overtime when she works on holidays.

After working 20 hours a week for three months, Sandra makes the decision to cut her hours to 9 per week, because she doesn't need the extra shifts.

Sandra is making at least \$13/hour in tips; she eats at the Grille three or four nights a week for half price, and she always puts her name in to work on holidays so she can make time-and-half overtime. She complains to her supervisor when she's not scheduled to work on holidays. She also continues to take her sick days, even though only those who work at least 20 hours a week are supposed to take sick days.

It's OK. I Work Here. (Continued)

Because of the employee benefits, Sandra is saving most of her paycheck. Since the Grille is near her best friend's house downtown, Sandra uses her employee parking spot for visits. Lately, Sandra has been letting her boyfriend use her parking space for his job near the Mesquite Grill.

Sandra is abusing her employee benefits. One way is given below. List two or three other ways you believe she is abusing her employee benefits privileges.

1. Taking a space in the employee lot to visit her friend is dishonest.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Boss's Dilemma

Employee benefits are not a gift. They are a reward for being a good employee. With benefits comes the responsibility of using them wisely and ethically. When use of benefits is abused by some employees, all employees can be affected, because employers may adjust, eliminate, or revise the benefits program.

Sandra has created a problem at the *Mesquite Grille* by abusing her benefits privileges. Working with a partner or a small group, write a set of benefits privileges that make it impossible for employees to cheat the *Mesquite Grille* in the way that Sandra is doing.

Think carefully about what benefits will motivate employees to work at the *Grille*, while at the same time being fair to the employer. Here are three guidelines to follow:

- Keep the tone positive. Write about the benefits the employees can have, not about what they can't have.
- Keep the words brief and to the point. Eliminate excess language that doesn't add to the point.
- Review your privilege statements to make sure they are clear and easy to understand. Rewrite any that can be improved.

Boss's Dilemma (Continued)

The first benefit is written for you.

Benefit 1: A parking space in the employee parking lot is provided for each employee to use during the hours they are working on the job. As shifts change, the parking space will be used by the incoming shift workers.

Benefit 2: _____

Benefit 3: _____

Benefit 4: _____

Instructor's Guide

Students often don't understand the dollar value of benefits and consider only their salary when deciding whether to take a job. The purpose of this exercise is to expose students to the value of employee benefits, and to make them aware of what bosses consider to be benefit abuse.

To expand the lesson, ask students to write a memo from the boss to Sandra. The memo should point out how benefits are to be used. It should be seen as an information document and should not be unnecessarily negative, as Sandra may just be naive about what employers expect. A good opening sentence will deliver a positive or neutral message, such as "Congratulations on completing your first three months at Mesquite Grill."

Related Web site

You may refer to the following Web site for information that will help students in writing a document that contains a negative message:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p_subnegmess.html

Solutions to Activities

It's OK. I Work Here.

1. Taking a space in the employee lot to visit her friend is dishonest.
2. For a food server who works only 9 hours a week, using the 50% discount 4 nights a week is impolite. Many employers would consider this behavior unethical.
3. Asking for overtime hours only shows a selfish attitude and is unethical. Complaining when she doesn't get the hours she wants shows disrespect for the employer.
4. Employee parking spaces are meant for employees only. Letting anyone else use the space is dishonest and unethical.

Boss's Dilemma

Benefit 1: A parking space in the employee parking lot is provided for employees to use only during the hours they are working on the job. As shifts change, the parking space will be used by the incoming shift workers.

Benefit 2: Employees may eat at Mesquite Grill for 50% off the cost of the meal immediately before or after a shift they have worked. The discount applies only during shift times.

Solutions to Activities (Continued)

Boss's Dilemma (Continued)

Benefit 3: One sick day is provided for every two months an employee works at least 20 hours a week. These days are to be taken only when the employee is ill.

Benefit 4: Employees who work on holidays will receive overtime pay. Overtime hours will be scheduled equitably among all employees.

Related Materials

Activities in this lesson are similar to the material found in *It's for Real Workplace Ethics*.

You may download a free issue on our Web site. *It's for Real Workplace Ethics, NEW Series III*, will be available for fall classes. Samples will be available by mid-March. Please contact us if you would like to be placed on the list for a sample.

For more information about *It's for Real*, or other CSP products, please visit our Web site.

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