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Work Ethics Party Time

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 sick days or paid days off fairly and ethically. The sick days off are designed to be for illness only and not meant to be used at the employees discretion. The lesson discusses the new system of using paid days off as an alternative.

Primary Learning Goals:

Essential Questions:

- How can the way you treat your employee sick days impact your job?
- What are the differences between employee sick days in the traditional system and the current system of having paid days off?

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 6, Spring 2008

Mini-Lesson Standards: (1) Identifies problems, alternative solutions, and consequences of alternative solutions. (2) Uses appropriate techniques to resolve given problems. (3) Chooses ethical courses of action. (4) Demonstrates adaptability, dependability, and responsibility and social behaviors such as tolerance, honesty, empathy, and courtesy.

Mini-Lesson Correlations: Workplace ethics, work readiness, critical thinking, problem solving

Party Time

Monique is tired, sleepy, and irritable when her mother wakes her at 7 a.m. on Saturday morning and says it's time to get ready for work. When Monique agreed three weeks ago to work today, she didn't know about last night's surprise birthday party for her best friend, Sara. After coming home late from Sara's party and getting only a few hours' rest, Monique just wants to turn over, close her eyes, and go back to sleep.

Party Time (Continued)

Fifteen minutes later, Monique's mom appears again, and this time she sounds annoyed, "Monique, you have 30 minutes to get dressed and out the door," she says. Monique responds, "I think I'll call Ms. Wembley and tell her I'm sick. I don't feel like going to work today."

"You've not had that job long enough to take off, and Ms. Wembley is counting on you. She hired you because she thought you were responsible," commented Monique's mom as she closed the door and walked away.

Monique knew she had to decide soon whether to turn over and go back to sleep or get dressed. After considering her choices, she made her decision.

What do you think Monique should do in this situation?

Sick Days

Some companies guarantee their employees a set number of sick days each year. These are supposed to be used for illness only; however, a few people take advantage of the policy by taking their "sick days" for other purposes. They feel they are entitled to take time off "on the clock." This is irresponsible behavior and it can lead to job termination.

Here are complaints from three employees. What do you think about their comments? What role does responsibility play in each situation?

Employee 1: "When I told my supervisor that I need to take my sick days soon because I haven't used them up this year, he got really mad. I don't get it. Those are my days!"

Sick Days (Continued)

Employee 2: "I took a sick day last week to visit my brother who lives out of town. My boss found out and jumped all over me. He told me I would lose my job if I did that again. I couldn't believe he was so rude. I wanted to tell him off."

Employee 3: "No job is important enough for me to give all my time to it. I'm more valuable than that. If the company can't give me some days off now and then, I'll look around for a company that treats its employees better."

Instructor's Guide

Companies are developing ways to cut down on the sick days that their employees take unnecessarily. One concept that has gained in popularity is called "Paid Days Off" or "Paid Time Off." Under this plan, a company designates the number of days during one year that an employee may be away from work without jeopardizing his or her job. PDOs are usually a combination of vacation days, sick days, and holidays.

For example, employees might have 20 Paid Days Off each year and be able to take those days for whatever purpose they wish without being penalized, in contrast to the traditional plan of having 10 vacation days, 8 holidays, and 2 sick days. When an employee uses up all the Paid Days Off, even for sickness, any extra days taken are deducted from the paycheck.

Discuss with your students the concept of PDOs. Do they prefer this arrangement for time off? Or do they like the traditional two weeks' vacation plus a designated number of sick days and holidays?

To expand this lesson, ask your students to name some of the excuses they have heard people give for taking sick days when they aren't sick. Ask them to put themselves in the employer's place. How would they feel about losing money if employees often falsely called in sick?

Related Web Site

The Web site below provides helpful information on sick leave vs. paid time off.

<http://management.about.com/od/conflictres/a/SickLvPTO1104.htm>

Solutions to Activities

Party Time

Allow students to engage in a discussion of what is the responsible ethical behavior. Their conclusions should lead to Monique getting out of bed, dressing, and going to work.

Sick Days

Employee No. 1 has a problem with entitlement. Employees are not “entitled” to take sick days for any purpose other than illness.

Employee No. 2 doesn't understand that employees work at the “will” of the employer. To classify this reprimand from the employer as “rude” shows an immature attitude—one that is not based on sound job practices.

Employee No. 3 has an unrealistic attitude toward work—an arrogance about his/her value to the company. This irresponsible attitude will likely end in the employee's failure, especially if the employee changes jobs often in an effort to get more time off.

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 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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