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There are many different guidelines that teachers “should” follow. However, is it required that these guidelines are followed? Are these things state law? Many teachers run into ethical and legal complications and disagreements numerous times throughout their careers. However, many people need to understand that laws pertain to teachers’ rights and responsibilities; they don’t express what teachers should do.

The legal influences on education include the constitutional amendments as well as the laws brought forth by the state. The state laws regulate teacher qualifications, working conditions, and teachers’ legal rights. One important and most common law regarding school systems is involving child abuse. All states have laws requiring teachers to report suspected child abuse. Reporting, however, may be difficult as you may be afraid of what will happen if you report the situation. It is vital that, as an educator, you never ask a child a leading or pointed question that may suggest an answer. It is also important to not make specific statements judging the matter/situation.

According to Dr. Robert Sweetland, it is important that teachers be cautious about forcing a child to do something without due process and documentation. This is especially true of children who are enrolled in an Exceptional Educational Need program. Due to Minnesota laws, disciplinary measures can be a trap for teachers if due process is violated or if the circumstances of the situation are a bit gloomy.

As many people would expect, as a Minnesota teacher, you are expected to work alongside numerous other people while working diligently, respectfully, and cooperatively. It is important that student issues and concerns are not discussed in the open due to FERPA and confidentiality rights of the student. Instead, it is essential that all conversations about others is done privately.

There are many different legal and ethical expectations as a Minnesota teacher. As I continue to grow and develop into a successful, professional educator, it will be important to understand what is expected of my ethical decisions as well as the understanding of what needs to report due to the law.