

Return to learn: Trustworthiness

This year, perhaps more than any other, parents, educators, and students are making incredibly challenging decisions. It's important in these moments to assume best intentions, and trust that everyone is trying to do what they think is right and necessary to ensure a safe and impactful education experience.

In situations where there isn't a clear and obvious answer, it's useful to have a tool, like the Integrity-in Action Checklist, to help check our decision-making. Not every decision will pass each test below. Sometimes, the right decision isn't fair to everyone, for example. However, checking your actions against the Integrity-in-Action Checklist can help ensure that you make good choices and maintain trust.

INTEGRITY-IN-ACTION CHECKLIST

Would my decisions pass each of these tests?	Yes	No
Golden Rule Test: If the situation was reversed, is this how I would want to be treated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairness Test: Is this fair to everybody involved in and affected by my actions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Truth Test: Does this represent the whole truth — no distortions, omissions, or spin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conscience Test: Would I feel good about this afterward — no regrets, no guilt?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Role Model/Mentor Test: Would the people whose integrity I respect most be proud of this?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Front-Page Test: Would I want this reported on the front page of the newspaper?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consequences Test: Would this lead to positive consequences and avoid negative consequences now and in the future?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What-If-Everybody-Did-This Test: Would I want to live in a world where everybody did this?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guiding Beliefs Test: Would this be supported by the philosophical, religious, political, and/or ideological worldviews guiding my life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What if it's still not clear what to do?

1. Stop!
2. Think it over some more.
3. Seek additional insight from individuals whose integrity you respect.



Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).

Trustworthiness for Educators: Even people with the best of intentions can sometimes make the wrong decision, especially when navigating the countless changes created by a global pandemic. As you work to bring students back to the classroom safely, or migrate your lessons to online delivery, use the Integrity-in-Action Checklist to make sure the choices you make are thoughtful and build trust with students, parents, and your colleagues.

Trustworthiness for Students: Students can use the Integrity-in-Action Checklist to help them make choices that could impact the health and safety of others. ("Is it fair to my classmates if I don't follow guidelines to help stop the spread of COVID-19?") Likewise, students working remotely can use the checklist to help make good decisions about how they engage with school. ("Do I want others to know that I was watching TV rather than paying attention to this online lesson?")

Trustworthiness for Parents: The decisions parents make in the best interest of their child also impact the health, safety, and learning experiences of everyone else at school. Use the Integrity-in-Action Checklist to make sure the decisions you make are not only good for your children, but the teachers and other students with whom they interact. In addition, families can use the checklist to help guide the decisions their students make. “I know it’s uncomfortable to wear a mask, but let’s look at the truth test. While the mask is uncomfortable, the truth is I can wear it, get used to it, and keep myself and others safe.”

Download an Integrity-In-Action Checklist

Learn more about character education.