

Kids and Ethics:

Age Appropriate Foundations

In an effort to provide K-12 teachers with the ability to discuss ethical issues in their classrooms, it is important to begin by providing them with a working definition that is both age appropriate and relevant to the learners.

With this sentiment in mind, the following definitions were created for the K-4, 5-8, and 9-12 divisions of the American K-12 public school environment. The concepts are in line with both the general definition of ethics as described in prominent dictionaries (Webster's, American Heritage, etc.) as well as with the general principles of moral development discussed by Lawrence Kohlberg.

These foundations do not replace a formal definition of ethics; rather, they provide educators with foundations for discussing ethical development, dilemmas, and issues with their students that are age appropriate and relevant in terms of their general moral development.

Ethics refers to:

<u>K-4:</u>	Understanding what is good and bad Choosing to act in a way that doesn't cause harm (harm to self and others) Treating others, as you like to be treated Being FAIR.
<u>5-8:</u>	Choosing to act in a way that doesn't cause harm---harm to anyone, self, others; Developing your own internal conscience regarding what is good and bad Being FAIR and respectful---regardless of what other people do.
<u>9-12:</u>	A guiding philosophy that allows you to rely upon and use your internal conscience to make decisions that reflect your moral duties and obligations to society. Choosing to act with in a way that does not cause harm in a global society.

