

Elementary applicants please write a response to one of the two case studies provided below, in essay form, no more than two pages (500 words-typed).

1) The heart of the matter

Cameron is known widely as a teacher who successfully encourages creative writing and whose students regularly win a district-wide poetry prize in the annual competition sponsored by the provincial writers' federation. Cameron believes this success with beginning writers depends on respecting students' privacy when they write in their journals, which builds trust and allows them to write from the heart, knowing that personal things will not be shared with anyone but their teacher. This week grade 4 student, Ainsley, has written about a child who is frightened and plans to run away because of fighting at home. Cameron finds the tone of Ainsley's story disturbing, using details that seem too specific to be fictional, which suggests the student might be thinking of doing something rash. Is this story a cry for help? If Ainsley might do something dangerous like running away, the parents ought to know. But how can Cameron break her promise of confidentiality to her students without destroying the trust it has taken months to develop? How should the teacher handle this situation?

2) What's in a name?

After five years of teaching grade 3 in rural Canada, Dana is taking on grade 6 for the first time. The school year gets off to a typical start with plenty of ups and downs as everyone settles in and Dana begins to feel comfortable with the group of upper elementaries. One day after class one of the quieter students stays behind to talk. Once the others collect their things and leave the room, Dana sits down with the 11-year-old and, after they share a few things about the recent lesson, the teacher asks how things are going. Somewhat nervously the student explains that they have chosen to change their name and pronouns after joining the school's Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). Dana is supportive of Kari's (new name) choice and agrees to refer to them appropriately in class and in writing. Early the next morning Dana is called to the principal's office where Kari's parents explain in no uncertain terms that *Carrie* (given name) is not old enough to make a life-altering decision and must not be allowed to attend the GSA which is obviously spreading wild ideas. They are alarmed that their child is being taught about sexual orientation and gender identity, demand such private matters be left to them, and insist that all staff use their child's birth name and corresponding pronouns. Before Dana can say anything, the bell rings, ending the meeting. As Dana rushes to greet the grade 6s, there is Kari, standing alone in the hall apparently in tears. What is this teacher to do?