Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

You are Vice Principal of a degree college in one of the middle – class towns. Principal has recently retired and management is looking for his replacement. There are also feelers that the management may promote you as Principal. In the meantime, during annual examination the flying squad came from the university caught two students red-hande3d involving in unfair means. A senior lecturer of the college was personally helping these student in this act. This senior lecturer also happens to be close to the management. One of the students was son of a local politician who was responsible in getting college affiliated to the present reputed university. The second student was son of a local businessman who has donated maximum funds for running of the college. You immealately informed the management regarding this unfortunate incident. The management told you to resolve the issue with flying squad at any cost. They further said that such incident will not only tarnish the image of the college but also the politician and businessman are very important personalities for the functioning of the college. You were also given hint that your further promotion to Principal depends on your capability in resolving this issue with flying squad. In the meantime, you were intimated by your administrative officer that certain members of the student union are protesting outside the college gate against the senior lecturer and the students involved in this incident and

demanding strict action against defaulters.

1. **Discuss the ethical issues involved in the case.**
2. **Critically examine the options available with you as Vice Principal. What option will you adopt and why?**

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2021	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
20	~250 words

Answer Hint

Academic integrity, fairness, conflict of interest, institutional autonomy, political pressure, nepotism, professional ethics, examination malpractice, accountability, impartiality, transparency, student welfare, ethical leadership

Model Answer

Introduction

The case presents a conflict between personal career advancement and professional integrity. The Vice Principal must protect academic standards while resisting pressure from influential individuals.

Ethical Issues

- **Integrity:** Concealing examination malpractice would violate honesty and professional duty.
- **Impartiality:** Students must face the same rules irrespective of family influence or financial connections.
- **Conflict of interest:** The lecturer's relationship with the management and the students' influential parents may distort decision-making.
- **Institutional credibility:** Suppression of the incident would undermine public confidence in the college.
- **Accountability:** The lecturer and students must be dealt with through established procedures.

Options and Evaluation

- **Suppress the incident:** Protects the college's immediate reputation and the Vice Principal's promotion prospects, but institutionalises corruption and invites further malpractice.
- **Negotiate an informal settlement:** May calm tensions temporarily but compromises fairness and undermines the university's authority.

- **Publicly condemn the accused immediately:** Signals firmness but risks prejudging the matter before a fair inquiry.
- **Follow formal procedures:** Preserve the flying squad's report, inform the competent university authority and initiate disciplinary proceedings. This is the most ethical and defensible option.

Preferred Course of Action

I would refuse to manipulate the report, cooperate with the university's inquiry and ensure due process for all concerned. The lecturer's role should be investigated separately, and any proven misconduct should attract appropriate disciplinary action. Student protests should be handled peacefully through dialogue while protecting the inquiry from interference.

Conclusion

A college's reputation rests on the credibility of its academic standards, not concealment of wrongdoing. Ethical leadership requires impartiality, procedural fairness and courage to resist improper pressure.

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