

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

The purpose of this procedure is to provide all staff, students, volunteers and community members with information to increase their awareness of their role in protecting children from inappropriate conduct by adults.

In a professional staff/student relationship, school employees maintain boundaries that are consistent with the legal and ethical duty of care that school personnel have for students.

Inappropriate boundaries are acts, omissions or patterns of behavior by a school employee that do not have an educational purpose and result in abuse of the staff/student professional relationship.

UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

Examples of inappropriate boundaries include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any type of inappropriate physical contact with a student or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the Board's policy on Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students;
- Showing pornography to a student;
- Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the professional staff-student relationship;
- Socializing where students are consuming alcohol or drugs;
- Referring students when appropriate to guidance/counseling staff when students confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff;
- Sending students on personal errands;
- Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters to students;
- Maintaining personal contact, other than legitimate school business, with a student outside of school by phone, email, Instant Messenger or Internet chat rooms, social networking Web sites, or letters without including the parent/guardian;
- Socializing outside of school-sponsored events, except as participants in organized community or other appropriate activities; and/or,
- Giving a student a ride alone in a vehicle in a non-emergency situation.

APPEARANCES OF IMPROPRIETY

The following activities may create the appearance of impropriety. Whenever possible, staff should avoid these situations. If unavoidable, these activities should be reported to the appropriate administrator as soon as possible.

- Being alone with an individual student out of the view of others;
- Inviting or allowing individual students to visit the staff member's home;
- Visiting a student's home (unless as an essential function of the job); and/or,
- Social networking with students for non-educational purposes.

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

Students and their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the principal or other administrator if they believe a teacher or other staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates this policy.

Staff members are required to promptly notify the principal or other administrator if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Staff violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. The violation may also be reported to the state Office of Professional Practices. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will result in referral to Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement in accordance with the board's policy on Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.

TRAINING

All employees and volunteers will receive training on appropriate staff /student boundaries.

DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND REPORTING PROTOCOLS

This policy and procedure is included on the District website and in all employee, student and volunteer handbooks. Annually, all administrators and staff will receive copies of the District's reporting protocol.



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