

PERSONNEL

Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Conduct

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.

A boundary invasion means an act, omission, or pattern of such behavior by a school employee that does not have an educational purpose; and results in abuse of the staff/student professional relationship.

Examples of inappropriate boundary invasions by staff members include but are not limited to the following:

**ADULT-STUDENT BOUNDARIES**

APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
Maintaining appropriate personal space	Invading personal space – too close
Reasonable eye contact	Maintaining prolonged, intense eye contact
Student aides perform work in the learning environment that is related to educational purposes.	Student aides are assigned duties that meet personal needs of the teacher or are unrelated to any educational purpose.
Conversations with students are appropriate to the school environment and support student learning and growth.	Conversations with students become personal in nature and confidential – asking students to “just keep it our secret.”
Appropriate use of student conferences in a manner consistent with educational purpose.	Ongoing pattern of spending time alone with student in a manner inconsistent with or devoid of educational purposes/expectations.
Student-teacher relationship is centered on school events & activities and is professional in nature.	Student-teacher relationship is maintained outside of school events (taking student to lunch or a movie alone; giving special gifts; consistent giving rides home alone; receiving or writing secret notes) and is personal in nature.

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**ADULT-STUDENT BOUNDARIES (continued)**

APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
Maintain fair and equal treatment of all students with only occasional educationally justifiable expectations.	Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the professional staff-student relationship (e.g. covering for or providing excuses for special student privileges, writing passes repeatedly for favored students to cover tardiness or absences).
Student-teacher communication is appropriate to the educational purpose and understood by general school population.	Student-teacher communication has implied messages, inside understanding, jokes or innuendos of a sexual nature that are not commonly understood by general school population.
Leaders of extracurricular activities maintain clear standards around gender issues and harassment.	Leaders of extracurricular activities encourage atmosphere of loose and inappropriate boundaries around gender and harassment issues.
A pat on the back, or shoulder or arm.	Shoulder massage, lingering touches, requesting affection “give me a hug,” “give me a kiss.”
Exercising good judgment on whether to, and under what circumstances it is appropriate to, touch students.	Touching students inappropriately or in ways that may lead students to misinterpret the intent due to their individual circumstances, cultural standards, or their developmental stage.
Teachers aware of student needs and referring them to appropriate guidance/counseling or school related support services (nurse, etc.).	Teachers (without appropriate training in effective advising) acting as helpers for serious student problems.
Maintaining contact for educational purposes via district authorized e-mail, phone service, or on-line learning sites.	Maintaining personal contact via private phone, e-mail, texting or other social networking web sites.

**Reporting Violations:**

Student 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) or the superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

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**Disciplinary Action:**

Staff violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. The violation will also be reported to the state Office of Professional Practices. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also 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 new employees and volunteers will receive training on appropriate staff/student boundaries within three months of employment. Continuing employees will receive training every three years.

**Dissemination of Policy and Reporting Protocols:**

This policy and procedure shall be include on the district Web site 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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