

Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries

Purpose

This policy sets forth expectations for ethical standards of conduct during interactions with students and informs all staff, students, volunteers, parents or guardians and community members of their role in protecting children from inappropriate conduct.

Scope

This policy applies to the Superintendent, administrators, staff, students, volunteers, parents, guardians and community members.

Policy

1. GENERAL STANDARDS

- 1.1. The Board of Directors expects all district staff to maintain the highest professional standards when they interact with students. District staff are required to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning by consistently maintaining professional boundaries.
 - 1.1.1. For the purposes of this policy and its procedure, the terms “district staff,” “staff member(s),” and “staff” also includes volunteers.
 - 1.1.2. For the purposes of this policy and its procedure, the term “student” means any school-aged child.
 - 1.1.3. Professional staff/student boundaries are those that are consistent with the legal and ethical duty of care that district employees have for students.
- 1.2. The interactions and relationships between district staff and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust, an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students, both in and outside of the educational setting, and consistency with the educational mission of the district.
- 1.3. District staff will not intrude on a student’s physical and emotional boundaries unless the intrusion is necessary to serve a demonstrated educational purpose. An educational purpose is one that relates to the staff member’s duties in the district.
- 1.4. Staff members are expected to be aware of the appearance of impropriety in their own conduct and the conduct of other staff when interacting with students. Staff members will notify and discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they suspect or question whether their own or another staff member’s conduct is inappropriate or constitutes a violation of this policy.
- 1.5. The Board recognizes that staff may have familial and pre-existing social relationships with parents or guardians and students. Staff members should use appropriate professional judgement when they have a dual relationship to students to avoid the appearance of impropriety or favoritism and violating of this policy. Staff members will proactively discuss these circumstances with their building administrator or supervisor.

2. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

- 2.1. The Board supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, district staff are prohibited from inappropriately communicating with students online or from engaging in any conduct on social networking websites that violates the law, district policies or procedures, or other generally recognized professional standards.
3. District staff whose conduct violates this policy may face discipline and/or termination consistent with the district's policies and procedures, and internet use agreements, as applicable.
4. The Superintendent or designee will develop protocols for reporting and investigating allegations and develop procedures and training to accompany this policy.

Related Procedures

2022P1-Electronic Resources

3205P1-Sexual Harassment of Students Prohibited

3207P1-Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

3421P1-Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Prevention

5280P1-Termination of Employment

5630P1-Volunteers

Policy Cross References

2022-Electronic Resources

3205-Sexual Harassment of Students Prohibited

3207-Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

3421-Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Prevention

5280-Termination of Employment

5281-Disciplinary Action and Discharge

5630-Volunteers

Policy Legal References

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Chapter 9A.44, RCW – Sex offenses

Chapter 9A.88 RCW – Indecent exposure—Prostitution

RCW 28A.400.320 – Crimes against children—Mandatory termination of classified employees—Appeal—Recovery of salary or compensation by district

RCW 28A.405.470 – Crimes against children—Mandatory termination of certificated employees—Appeal—Recovery of salary or compensation by district

RCW 28A.405.475 – Termination of certificated employee based on guilty plea or conviction of certain felonies—Notice to superintendent of public instruction—Record of notices

RCW 28A.410.090 – Revocation or suspension of certificate or permit to teach—Criminal basis—Complaints—Investigation—Process

RCW 28A.410.095 – Violation or noncompliance—Investigatory powers of superintendent of public instruction—Requirements for investigation of alleged sexual misconduct towards a child—Court orders—Contempt—Written findings required

RCW 28A.410.100 – Revocation of authority to teach—Hearings

Chapter 28A.640 RCW – Sexual Equality

Chapter 28A.642 RCW – Discrimination Prohibition

Chapter 49.60 RCW – Washington State Law Against Discrimination

Chapter 181-87 WAC – Professional certification—Acts of unprofessional conduct

Chapter 181-88 WAC – Definitions of sexual misconduct, verbal and physical abuse—Mandatory disclosure—Prohibited agreements

Management Resources

Policy & Legal News, October 2015 – Professional staff/student boundaries policy and procedure updated

Policy History

Action:	Date:
Approved by the Board	January 28, 2015
Revised	April 20, 2016
Revised	
Revised	