

STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

Working One-On-One with Children and Young People

The following summary of expectations applies to all situations where staff are providing one-on-one learning assistance or feedback, behavior assistance/monitoring, counseling, testing and/or assessment.

<u>Make it Public</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The more visible and/or public the location the better.</u> • <u>Use the authorized information technology systems.</u> • <u>Do not use personal e-mail, electronic communication, websites, and/or social media platforms to communicate with students or families.</u>
<u>Make it Authorized</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Parents/guardians should be informed and give consent.</u> • <u>Activity must be authorized by an appropriate administrator.</u>
<u>Make it Timely</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Provide support during normal work hours.</u> • <u>Do not conduct excessively long sessions.</u>

Managing Privacy Expectations

School staff rely in different ways on being able to provide a degree of privacy for students. This may be to protect the student's dignity, to provide an environment conducive to the service/assessment being provided or to respect the student's desire for confidentiality.

Children and young people will often assume a high level of confidentiality when disclosing serious issues of a personal nature or reporting harassment or bullying. For these reasons, staff needs to find a careful balance between respecting the sensitive and private nature of counseling or service provided and the professional's duty of care obligations for the safety and wellbeing of the student.

Good practice in managing these circumstances is the following:

- Health/physical care should be provided with respect for the student's dignity and in a manner approved by the student, his/her parents/guardians, and within District policy.

- Counseling should be provided in unlocked rooms with part-glass doors, where possible, that are located near staff traffic areas.
- Avoid out-of-hours contact.
- While parental consent is often not applicable in many counseling situations, the school will provide all parents/guardians with written information about the school's counseling services which outlines confidentiality and privacy issues.
- Ensure student appointments and counseling notes are documented properly, while preserving appropriate levels of confidentiality.

Conducting Home Visits

Staff must ensure they follow the specific home visiting protocols that apply. The key principle is that a home visit should place no one at unreasonable risk and that identified minor risks are consciously managed.

A summary of general expectations is provided below.

<u>Inform</u>	<u>Home visits must be authorized and documented by the administration and this must include information about when and where visits are being undertaken and the expected departure and return times.</u>
<u>Prepare</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>All available information about the safety of the proposed visit must be considered and risks managed.</u> • <u>Mobile phones must be taken and school ID should be visible.</u> • <u>Parents/guardians are to be notified in advance of the intended visit.</u>
<u>Protect</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Do not enter the house if parents/ guardians are not at home.</u> • <u>Speak with the student where the parent/guardian is present or clearly visible.</u> • <u>Do not interview or interact with students in bedrooms or other locations not conducive to the purpose of the visit.</u> • <u>Have a colleague present if problems are anticipated.</u> • <u>Document the visit.</u>

Examples of Boundary Invasions by staff members, include, but are not limited to the following:

- Making any type of inappropriate physical contact with a student or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the law or policies addressing the prohibition against Harassment and Retaliation.
- Condoning hazing, initiations or other rituals that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to students, regardless of the student's willingness to participate.
- Showing inappropriate images to a student, including, but not limited to violent, disturbing or sexually explicit or pornographic subject matter.
- Dating a student, or discussing or planning a future romantic or sexual relationship with a student.
- Making sexual advances toward a student, including but not limited to personalized comments about a student's body, appearance, physical features, attributes or attractiveness, off color jokes, or sexual innuendoes.
- Telling off color jokes or making comments with sexual innuendo.
- Encouraging a flirtatious, romantic, or sexual relationship with a student.
- Unnecessarily invading a student's personal space or privacy.
- Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the professional staff/student relationship.
- Socializing where students are consuming alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.
- Providing or offering to provide alcohol, drugs, or tobacco to students.
- For non-guidance/non-counseling staff, excessively encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to immediately use professional judgment as contained in this training and refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff.
- Sending students on personal errands unrelated to any educational, athletic, non-curricular or extracurricular purpose.
- Bantering, joking or making comments of a sexual nature with students.
- Asking a student to keep a secret.

- Disclosing inappropriate personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other inappropriate private matters to one (1) or more students.
- Addressing students with personalized terms of endearment or pet names that would suggest the staff member feels love or affection for the student. As a staff member, permitting students to address you by your first name, nickname, personalized terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner.
- Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by telephone, text message, e-mail, Instant Messenger, Internet chat rooms, social networking websites or letters beyond homework or other legitimate school business.
- Exchanging gifts cards or letters that are personal or extravagant in nature with a student beyond customary student-staff gifts.
- Socializing or spending time with students outside of school-related or school-sponsored curricular or extracurricular activities or organized community activities, including but not limited to activities such as going out for beverages, meals or movies, shopping, traveling and recreational activities.
- Giving a student a ride alone in a vehicle in a non-emergency situation or in a situation that can be avoided. If a staff member is approved to give a student a ride, the student shall ride in the back seat of the vehicle when possible, and staff member must attempt to gain prior permission from the parent for the transportation arrangement.

Romantic or Sexual Relationship examples, include, but are not limited to the following:

Staff members shall be prohibited from dating, courting, or entering into or attempting to form a romantic or sexual relationship with any student enrolled in the school or any other public or private school, regardless of the student's age. Students of any age are not legally capable of consenting to romantic or sexual interactions with staff members.

Prohibited romantic or sexual interaction involving students includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual physical contact.
- Romantic flirtation, propositions, or sexual remarks.
- Sexual slurs, leering, epithets, sexual or derogatory comments.
- Personal comments about a student's body, appearance, attractiveness or physical attributes.
- Sexual jokes, notes, stories, drawings, gestures or pictures.
- Spreading sexual or romantic rumors.

- Touching a student's body or clothes in a sexual or intimate way.
- Accepting massages, or offering or giving massages other than in the course of injury care administered by an athletic trainer, coach, or health care provider.
- Restricting a student's freedom of movement in a sexually intimidating or provocative manner.
- Displaying or transmitting sexual objects, pictures, or depictions.

Inappropriate Social Interactions, including, but not limited to the following:

In order to maintain professional boundaries, staff shall ensure that their interactions with students are appropriate. Examples of prohibited conduct that violates professional boundaries include, but are not limited to:

- Touching students without a legitimate educational reason. Reasons could include, but are not limited to, the need for assistance when injured, restraint or intervention to prevent or separate students who are fighting, threatening to fight or posing a risk of violence or harm to others, a kindergartner having a toileting accident and requiring assistance, appropriate coaching instruction, or appropriate music instruction.
- Taking a student out of class without a legitimate educational reason.
- Being alone with a student behind closed doors without a legitimate educational reason.
- Initiating or extending contact with a student beyond the school day or outside of class times without a legitimate educational reason.
- Inviting a student to the staff member's home.
- Taking a student on outings without prior notification to and approval from both the parent/guardian and the building principal.
- Engaging in harassing, bullying, discriminatory, or other conduct prohibited by other District policies or by state or federal law and regulations.

Appearances of Impropriety

The following activities are boundary invasions and can create an actual impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Whenever possible, staff should avoid these situations. If unavoidable, these activities must be pre-approved by the appropriate administrator. If not pre-approved, the staff member must immediately report the occurrence to the principal or other appropriate administrator.

- Conducting ongoing, private conversations with individual students that do not have an educational purpose, are unrelated to school activities or the well-being of the student, and that take place in locations inaccessible to or not observable by others.
- Being alone with an individual student out of the view of others or in an inaccessible location, except in the context of school counselors providing professional counseling support services, teachers working with students in an after-school setting or during testing, or a school nurse providing medical services to a student.
- Inviting students for social contact off school grounds without the prior knowledge and express permission of the parent/guardian and an appropriate administrator.
- Social networking with students for non-educational purposes.

Staff members are expected to be aware of the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with the appropriate administrator whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of Policy GBEBB and this regulation.

Electronic Communication

The District supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, employees acting in their District capacity are prohibited from inappropriate online socializing, phone calls, texting, skyping, instant messaging, or use of any other telecommunication device, or from engaging in any conduct that violates the law, District policies or other generally recognized professional standards. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. Nothing in Policy GBEBB and this regulation prohibits employees, faculty, staff or students from the use of approved educational websites if such sites are used solely for educational purposes.

Electronic and online communication between staff members and students must be transparent, contemporaneously accessible to administrators and parents/guardians, and must be professional in content and tone. Such communication must be professional, non-sexual, appropriate to the circumstances, and unambiguous in meaning. Staff members must restrict one-on-one electronic communications with individual students to accounts, systems, and platforms that are provided by and accessible to the District schools or with the prior express permission of the appropriate administrator and the parent/guardian.

As with in-person communications, staff members shall avoid appearances of impropriety and refrain from inappropriate electronic communications with students. Factors that may be considered in determining whether an electronic communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

- The subject, content, purpose, authorization, timing, and frequency of the communication;

- Whether there was an attempt to conceal, shield, or misrepresent the nature of the communication from administrators and/or parents/guardians;
- Whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship; and/or
- Whether the communication contained sexual innuendo, such as for purposes of grooming the student for victimization.