

**STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS**

**(Maintaining Professional Boundaries)**

A boundary invasion is an act, omission, or pattern of behavior by a staff member that does not have an educational purpose and either abuses or compromises the staff/student professional relationship or has the potential to abuse or compromise the staff/student professional relationship.

Clear and reasonable boundaries for interactions between students and staff members are necessary to protect students from sexual misconduct and abuse and to protect staff members from misunderstandings and false accusations. All staff are required to maintain appropriate professional, moral, and ethical relationships in their conduct with students. They shall serve as positive role models for students at all times, whether on or off school property, both during and outside of school hours. Staff will not intrude on a student's physical and emotional boundaries, unless the intrusion is necessary to serve an educational, physical, mental, and/or emotional health purpose or to prevent an immediate risk of injury or harm to the student.

This regulation addresses a range of behaviors that include not only obviously unlawful or improper interactions with students, but also precursor grooming and other boundary-blurring behaviors that have the intention or effect of leading to more egregious misconduct.

All staff have a responsibility to provide and support an atmosphere conducive to learning through consistent, unambiguous, and fairly applied discipline. They shall maintain professional physical and emotional boundaries with students. These boundaries shall be maintained regardless of the student's age, the perceived consensual nature of the relationship or activity, the location of the activity, or whether the staff member directly supervises the student.

**Working with the Community**

Staff shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting. They shall also avoid excessive informal and social involvements with individual students and their families. It is the responsibility of the District staff to maintain a professional relationship with students and their families. Staff members have a responsibility to report to the administration when they suspect, recognize or observe the development of, or suspicion of the development of non-professional or potentially inappropriate personal relationships with students and/or their families.

Staff working in local communities face additional challenges in managing professional boundaries.

Following the advice offered here will assist staff to enjoy these social engagements without compromising their professional responsibilities. The guiding principles in managing these situations are that:

- Social contact should be generated via the relationship the staff member has with the parents/guardians of children and young people or by an event, such as a sporting event.
- Staff should avoid being alone or in unsupervised settings with children and young people in these situations.
- Staff should politely refuse to discuss matters relating to the workplace and should not discuss children and young people's learning or social progress, other than at times specifically set aside for that purpose.

Any concern a staff member has about whether or not a situation may be compromising or breaching a professional boundary should be discussed with an appropriate administrator.

### **Inappropriate Behavior Initiated by a Student**

In the event that a student initiates inappropriate behavior toward a staff member, the staff member must immediately document the incident and report it to the appropriate administrator. If applicable, the appropriate administrator will intervene and speak with the student and the student's parent/guardian about the alleged inappropriate behavior, and implement necessary follow-up discipline or guidance.

The District shall provide guidelines with respect to the provisions of Policy GBEBB and this regulation to current and new staff, to School Board members and to volunteers who interact with students or routinely work on school grounds.

Contracts with virtual school programs and other vendors providing instructional services to students will include a requirement that those staff members will comply with Policy GBEBB and this regulation.

### **Exceptions**

An emergency situation or a legitimate educational reason may justify deviation from professional boundaries. The staff member shall articulate the reason for any deviation from policy to that student, to the parent or guardian, to their supervisor and will ensure that an appropriate relationship is maintained with the student.

Under no circumstance will an educational or other reason justify deviation from the "Romantic and Sexual Relationships" prohibition.