

ELLSWORTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS**

The Ellsworth School Department Board expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators, and others to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their conduct with students. For the purposes of this policy, staff members also include school volunteers.

The Ellsworth School Department Board recognizes that many staff members are themselves parents or relatives of students, and have positive relationships established through interactions beyond the bonds of Ellsworth School Department. As such the Ellsworth School Department Board does not intend to diminish these relationships, but is defining appropriate staff behavior as it relates to students and defining the Ellsworth School Department Board's expectations of staff in an effort to protect the physical and emotional health of our students.

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust; an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in and outside of the educational setting; and consistent with the educational mission of the schools.

Staff members are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

Unacceptable Conduct

Examples of unacceptable conduct by staff members include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the Board's policy on Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students;
- B. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship that displays a lack of fairness and equity for other students and is done for other than appropriate educational purposes.
- C. Associating with students in the capacity of an Ellsworth School Department employee or volunteer, any situation or activity that includes the presence of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco or that could be considered sexually suggestive;
- D. For non-guidance/counseling staff, encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to be supportive but to refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff. In either case, staff involvement should be limited to a direct connection to the student's school performance;

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- E. Sexual banter, allusions, jokes, or innuendos with students;
- F. Asking a student to keep a secret;
- G. Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students;
- H. Addressing students with terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner; and allowing students to address you in such a manner;
- I. Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by methods such as but not limited to: phone, email, Instant Messenger or Internet chat rooms, social networking websites, or letters (beyond homework or other legitimate school business);

Conduct Requiring Caution

Before engaging in activities beyond the scope of normal school or family-based activities, staff members should review the activity with their building administrator and have prior permission from the student's parent or guardian.

- A. Being alone with individual students out of the view of others;
- B. Visiting a student's home, or allowing students to visit the staff member's home; unless on official school business;
- C. Exchanging personal gifts (beyond the customary student-teacher gifts);
- D. Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for meals or movies, shopping, traveling, and recreational activities) outside of school-sponsored events or except as participants in organized community activities.

Reporting Violations

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

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

No student, parent, guardian or staff member should undertake any investigation into suspected violations of this policy.

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Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Human Services and/or law enforcement in accordance with the Board's policy on reporting child abuse and neglect.

Dissemination of Policy

This policy shall be included in all employee, student and volunteer handbooks.

Cross Reference: ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
 GBEE – Employee Computer/Internet Use Policy
 GBEE-R – Employee Computer/Internet Rules

Adopted: December 9, 2014

Reviewed: February 13, 2018