

STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

The RSU #56 Board of Directors 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 intent of this policy is to ensure that 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 an educational setting; and consistent with the educational mission of the schools.

It is understood that staff members and their children may interact with and have friendships with the families of students outside of school. This policy is not intended to prohibit such interactions and friendships, provided that professional boundaries are maintained at all times.

Prohibited Conduct

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

- Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the board's policy ACAA- Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students;
- Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship;
- 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.
- Sexual banter, allusions, jokes or innuendos with students;
- Asking a student to keep a secret;
- Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students;
- Addressing students with terms of endearment, pet names or otherwise in an overly familiar manner; or allowing students to do the same to you.

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- “Friending” students or engaging in any other interactions on social networking sites or through any digital applications (outside of any school-approved activity); and
- Communicating with students on non-school matters via computer, text message, phone calls, letters, notes or any other means,
- Permitting students to address you by your first name, nickname or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;

Before engaging in the following activities, staff members will review the activity with their building principal or supervisor, as appropriate:

- Being alone with individual students out of public view;
- Driving students home or to other locations permitted with parental permission; (per policy EEBB *Use of Private Vehicles on School Business* - under no circumstances is an employee to transport a student one-on-one)
- Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member’s home (unless the student’s parent approves of the activity, such as when a student babysits or performs chores for a staff member);
- Visiting a student at home or in another location, unless on official school business known to the parent;
- Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by telephone, email, Instant Messenger or Internet chat rooms, or letters (beyond homework or other legitimate school business);
- Exchanging personal gifts (beyond the customary student-teacher gifts); and/or
- Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for meals or movies, shopping, traveling, having over to your house, and recreational activities) outside of school-sponsored events except as participants in organized community activities. * The exception would be students who are relatives, friends of your children, children of your friends.

***Please use “common sense”.**

POLICY: GBEB

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.

Reporting Violations

Students and/or their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the principal [or appropriate 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 appropriate building administrator or superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of this policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Health and Human Services, the District Attorney and/or law enforcement in accordance with the board's policy on Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.

Dissemination of Policy

This policy shall be disseminated to staff and volunteers by means determined by the Superintendent. All employees are required to read this policy annually and sign off on the appropriate form. This policy shall be referred to in student handbooks. [NOTE: further details on student/staff conduct shall have a link to the original policy on the RSU 56 website policy section.]

Cross Reference: ACAA- Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
JLF- Reporting Child Abuse
EEBB- Use of Private Vehicles on School Business

Adopted: July 11, 2017