

EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

The Sanford School Committee expects all Sanford School Department employees, volunteers and contracted providers to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their conduct with students.

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students are based upon mutual respect and trust, predicated by an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in and outside of the educational setting, and consistency with the educational mission of our schools.

The School Committee recognizes that staff members may interact with and have friendships with families of students outside of school. This policy is not intended to prohibit such interactions, provided that professional boundaries are maintained at all times.

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

Prohibited Conduct

Examples of unacceptable conduct by staff members that are expressly prohibited 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. Using sexual banter, allusions, jokes, or innuendos, sexually suggestive, flirtatious or coarse language with students;
- C. 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;
- D. Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students;
- E. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention beyond the context of their professional role;

- F. Addressing students with terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;
- G. “Friending” students or engaging in any other interactions on social media or through digital applications (outside of any school-approved activity);
- H. Communicating with students on non-school matters through phone calls, email, text messages, Messenger or any other digital methods, or by notes, letters or any other means.

Conduct Requiring Administrative Approval

Before engaging in the following activities, staff members should consult with the building principal or their supervisor, as appropriate:

- K. Being alone with individual students out of the view of others;
- L. Driving students home;
- M. Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member’s home;
- N. Visiting a student’s home, unless on official school business that is known and agreed to by the parent/guardian or otherwise in the context of visits between adult friends or relatives;
- O. Exchanging personal gifts beyond the customary student-teacher gifts;
- P. Socializing with students outside of school-sponsored or organized community activities.

Reporting Suspected Violations

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

Staff members must promptly notify the building principal or Superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

JLF - Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect
Adopted September 14, 2020