

Faculty and Staff Interaction with Students/Youth (C-17)

The Board of Education expects all of its employees to act with professionalism, integrity, due diligence, and in accordance with all laws, regulations, and policies involving the School District's resources and legal/ethical obligations. As employees of an educational institution, the District's employees must recognize that the education of children is the first concern of the school system.

All District employees are expected to accept responsibility for their conduct, and to understand that their conduct may be regarded as representative of the District, and that even off-duty conduct may adversely affect the ability of an employee to effectively perform his or her job duties. This is especially true of educational professionals, as their off-duty conduct, especially if it involves interaction with minors and with members of the school community, can directly impact their ability to maintain professional and appropriate relationships within the school or classroom. Employees are expected to abide by a standard of conduct that models good citizenship, and to be an example of self-discipline for students, parents, and the community. Employees are required at all times to avoid behavior that may cause them to lose the respect of the District's students, parents, and the District's community. Further, each member of the staff is expected to conduct himself/herself in a manner that will not conflict with local, state or federal laws. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or possible legal action, if applicable.

Specifically, the District expects that its employees maintain appropriate professional relationships with its students in particular, and any youth in general, in adherence to the following standards:

- a. Employees must treat all students equally, fairly, and with respect, and without discrimination.
- b. Employees must demonstrate respect and compliance with state and federal laws to protect information concerning students, families, staff and District matters.
- c. Employees, especially those employees with direct student contact, should strive, at all times, to be positive role models to students.
- d. At all times, adhere to legal requirements regarding the protection of confidential pupil information in accordance with District Policy, state and federal laws.
- e. Employees are responsible for helping to create a safe and positive environment within the School District. Employees are responsible for reviewing and complying with the school's policies regarding mandatory reporting of child abuse or neglect and complying with that policy, and with all statutory directives.
- f. Employees must avoid personal off-duty relationships with students, unless the Employee has a familial relationship with the student (e.g., parent-child, niece-nephew, cousin, etc.). Employees should be aware that, even when interacting with students outside of the school environment, these interactions have a direct impact on interaction between themselves and students within the school environment. Employees are expected to maintain positive and professional relationships with students and must refrain from sharing personal e-mail

addresses with students, text messaging students, using peer social network sites, or engaging in other similar behavior that might compromise an appropriate and professional relationship in the classroom and within the School District. Employees must understand that even an appearance of inappropriate relationships will adversely impact their effectiveness with the school environment. Therefore, employees must be diligent in maintaining the highest ethical standards when interacting with youth both inside and outside the school environment and are strictly prohibited from forming such personal relationships with students outside of the classroom.

This prohibition is not intended to restrict employees' ability to participate in other community activities or form other, non-personal relationships with students (e.g., coaching community sports, volunteering for the Boy/Girl Scouts, involvement in church activities). However, staff members must ensure that they do not create inappropriate personal relationships with students through these activities.

Failure of any employee of the District to observe or adhere to the expectations, which are stated in this policy, may result in the termination or non-renewal of the employment contract of the employee in question. The standards/expectations which are stated here are not exclusive, and may be expanded or updated at the discretion of the School Board.

Adopted: October 6, 2008