

Board Policy

Professional Conduct between Staff and Students

1. PURPOSE

District staff show extraordinary dedication and care in their daily work with students. A hallmark of this commitment is the development of strong relationships between staff and students. We believe that:

- Children are always learning about healthy relationships, and their most significant learning about relationships comes from how adults behave.
- Consistent relationship boundaries help children feel safe. Boundaries help them trust adults and help them know what is ~~normal~~ healthy behavior, and feels right.
- Children need adults to be adults. Adults' behaviors set the conditions for ~~a~~ healthy relationships.
- Adults are responsible for creating safe spaces.

The purpose of this policy is to establish common understanding and expectations for all adults in our District on setting consistent and safe boundaries with students. Those boundaries create the healthy relationships and safe spaces that students need to thrive.

2. GENERAL STANDARDS & DEFINITIONS

-For purposes of this policy, **except as specifically noted**, “staff” and “staff members” —includes any and all District employees, coaches, substitutes, contracted service providers, and volunteers in their interactions with students in District schools and programs.

“Student” means any person: (a1) Who is: (Aa) In any grade from prekindergarten through grade 12; or (Bb) Twenty-one years of age or younger and receiving educational or related services from an education provider that is not a post-secondary institution of education; or (b2) Who left school or graduated from high school within 90 days of the alleged misconduct. Who was previously known as a student by the person engaging in sexual sexual conduct [MK1] and who left school or graduated from high school within 90 days prior to of the sexual conduct. **ORS**

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“Legitimate educational purpose” includes social-emotional support that serves the interest of the student and is not intended ~~not~~ to meet the personal needs of staff; conduct related to a student’s education; or providing ~~ding~~ ~~sion~~ of a service or benefit related to the student’s education^[EL2].

All staff should maintain the highest professional, and ethical standards when interacting with students. These standards are as defined by the TSPC (Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission) and by District policy. ~~In a school-related setting, the interactions and relationships between staff and students must be based on respect and trust, as well as an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between staff and students in and outside the educational setting.~~

Volunteers ~~also~~ play unique and important roles in students’ lives, and many also have relationships outside the school setting. **This policy applies to volunteers in the context of their volunteer commitment with the District.** The District expects volunteers to maintain appropriate conduct ~~as outlined in this and other policies~~ with students when they are engaged in District-authorized activities. as outlined in this and other policies.

3. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS BETWEEN STAFF AND STUDENTS^[EL3]

The interactions and relationships between staff and students should be based upon respect and trust, an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in and outside of the educational setting, and consistency with the educational mission of the schools. Staff members are required to complete annual training provided by the District on sexual conduct prevention to provide guidance and establish appropriate professional boundaries for student-staff interactions.

We recognize that forming a relationship with students is an important aspect of teaching; however, staff should not engage in ~~these~~ discussions with students when its purpose is to meet the staff’s personal needs rather than the student’s needs. If a student initiates a discussion about a significant personal or family problem, staff members are encouraged to seek guidance from appropriate

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resources such as their principal or school counselors, as needed.

Staff ~~will~~ may not intrude on a student's physical and emotional boundaries unless the purpose of the interaction is to serve a legitimate educational purpose or for the student's physical, mental, and/or emotional health ~~purpose~~. ~~An educational purpose is one that relates to the staff's duties in the District. Staff should avoid~~ Any appearance of boundary intrusions unrelated to a legitimate educational purpose or their legitimate staff duties. impropriety should be avoided.

A. Conduct Outside A School Setting

Staff shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting. ~~and shall avoid informal and social involvements with individual students that may infringe on~~ should be based on appropriate professional boundaries. Volunteers with community-based relationships with students are not subject to this provision in their relationships with those students in non-District settings. In addition to regular classroom instruction and extracurricular activities, staff members may also act in their professional capacity outside of the school day—for example, in providing appropriate occasions when staff may interact with students beyond the school day include before- and after-care, tutoring to improve students' academic skills, mentoring that provides students with positive role models, answering questions about school assignments, and hosting school-sanctioned or school-sponsored activities and events. We recognize that staff will also unintentionally encounter students out in our community in the normal course of their personal lives. ^[EL4] that reinforce positive behaviors.

Even during these and similar events during non-school hours, when District employees and third-party contractors are acting in their professional capacity, they ~~they and~~ must maintain at all times the highest ethical standards consistent with TSPC standards and District policies at all times.

One-to-one tutoring and mentoring offered during school or non-school hours

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must take place at the school unless the principal or appropriate supervisor has received prior notification of an off-site location and written permission from the parent/guardian has been obtained. Unless otherwise approved by the principal or other District administrator, all volunteers on District property must be under the supervision of a District staff member. Volunteers with community-based relationships with students are not subject to this provision with those students in non-district settings.

B. Appropriate use of Social Media

The District allows and supports the use of technology to communicate for legitimate educational purposes. As with all forms of communication, staff is expected to maintain professional boundaries with students when communicating via electronic communications and social media. All communication from employees to students must be for legitimate education-related purposes only and as transparent as possible.

A.C. Appropriate Personal and Community Relationships

~~Even during these and similar events during non-school hours, staff District employees and third party contractors are acting in their professional capacity and must maintain the highest ethical standards at all times.~~

There may be circumstances where there is an appropriate personal relationship between staff and a student's family that exists independently of the staff member's position with the District (e.g., when their families' children are friends). This policy is not intended to interfere with such relationships or to limit activities that are normally consistent with such relationships. Staff are strongly encouraged to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

~~It is understood~~ The District understands that staff may be involved in other roles in the community through civic, religious, family, athletic, scouting, private tutoring, or other organizations and programs whose participants may include District students. This policy is not intended to interfere with or restrict a staff

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member's ability to serve in those roles; however, staff members are strongly encouraged to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to the nature of the activity with regard to all youth with whom they interact in the course of their community involvement.

➤4. BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

A boundary violation is behavior or interaction by a staff member, or other adult in a position of power with a student, that has no legitimate educational purpose and has the potential to ~~abuse or~~ cause harm to the student. ~~Staff are expected to refrain from boundary violations.~~

A. PROHIBITED CONDUCT EXAMPLES

Examples of conduct that violates professional staff/student boundaries ~~in our~~ outside of school hours ~~includes, but is~~ are not limited to, the following:

- Any type of conduct that would be considered sexual harassment under the District's Non-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy (1.80.020-P);
- Having any sexual ~~physical~~ contact, including verbal or physical conduct or contact through written or electronic communications, with a student that is a sexual advance or request for a sexual favor or is of a sexual nature and is ~~that are~~ directed toward the student or that ~~has~~ves the effect of unreasonably interfering with the student's educational performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment as defined by ORS SB 155;;
 - Examples of this behavior include, but are not limited to, the following; ~~even if the student is no longer a minor;~~
 - Engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student;
 - Dating, flirting with, or propositioning a student;
 - Showing pornography to a student;

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- Discussing, writing, texting, transmitting, and/or displaying material to students about sexual topics unrelated to curriculum or a legitimate educational purpose;
- Banter, allusions, jokes, or innuendos of a sexual nature with students;
- Permitting students to engage in behaviors with staff that invade appropriate physical boundaries, e.g., allowing students to give shoulder massages to staff or allowing students to sit on a staff member's lap;
- Singling out a particular student or students for favoritism, special privileges, or exchanging of gifts beyond the employee-student relationship;
- Disclosing intimate or sexual matters to a student, unless necessary to serve a legitimate educational purpose; or a student physical, mental, and/or emotional health purpose.
- Bullying or other violations of the PPS Anti-Harassment Policy 4.30.060-P.
or
- Favoring a student when its purpose is to meet the staff's personal needs rather than the student's needs;
- Inviting individual students to the staff member's home without proper chaperones, without parental notice and approval unless otherwise noted in "Exceptions" section of the policy;
- Observing students who are consuming alcohol, drugs, or tobacco without intervening or reporting the conduct to appropriate personnel;
- Sending or accompanying a student on personal errands or travel unrelated to any legitimate educational purpose;
- Disclosing intimate or sexual matters to a student, unless necessary to

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~~serve an legitimate educational purpose; or a student physical, mental, and/or emotional health purpose; and well-being of the student.~~

- Telling a student to keep something secret from other adults;
- Addressing students, or permitting students to address staff members with personalized terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner that may affect appropriate professional boundaries;
- Giving a student a ride alone in a vehicle in a non-emergency situation; except as permitted under this policy and allowed in Field Trips 6.50.011-AD;
- ~~Permitting students to engage in behaviors with staff that invade appropriate physical boundaries, e.g., allowing students to give shoulder massages to staff or allowing students to sit on a staff member's lap.~~

~~If a student discloses information about the student's significant personal or family problems, staff members are expected to seek guidance from appropriate staff resources such as their principal or school counselors, as needed.~~

➤ **SOCIAL MEDIA and ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN STAFF AND STUDENTS:**

- ~~The District allows and supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, dDistrict employees acting in their dDistrict capacity are prohibited from inappropriate online socializing with students, including phone calls, texting, skypeing, instant messaging, or use of any other telecommunications device method, or from engaging in any conduct that violates the law, dDistrict policies, or other **generally generally** -recognized professional standards.~~
- Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. Nothing in this policy prohibits **employees, faculty, staff,** or students from the use of approved educational websites if such sites are used solely for legitimate educational purposes.

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- ~~As with all forms of communication, staff is expected to maintain professional boundaries with students when communicating via electronic communications and social media. All communication between staff and students from employees must be for legitimate education-related purposes only and as transparent as possible. Staff shall not communicate with students, for any reason, through use of a medium, blog, or app (software or phone application) that is designed to eliminate all traces or records of the communication (e.g., Snapchat). Staff should have no expectation of privacy when communicating to students, including on a social media platform (e.g. Facebook, Twitter). Staff should not promise students absolute confidentiality in their communications.~~

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- ~~District staff must maintain separate accounts for professional and personal social media use and may follow or accept requests to connect from current students, or non-staff former students, only through their professional social media presence established consistent with the requirements set forth in the Social Media Administrative Directive 8.60.045-AD. Staff shall not communicate with students, for any reason, through use of a medium, blog, or app (software or phone application) that is designed to eliminate all traces or records of the communication (e.g., Snapchat).~~

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- District employees and third-party contractors may not communicate with current students through social media directly or through private messaging tools without both written District approval and parental notice.
- All email communications ~~with~~ from employees to students must be through a PPS-provided email address ~~or on District-approved social media platforms,~~ as described in the District's Acceptable Use Policy (8.60.40) and Social Media Administrative Directive 8.60.045-AD. District

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~~staff are prohibited from communicating~~ may communicate with current students through social media directly or through private messaging tools without both written District approval and parental notice. Likewise, when communicating for professional purposes with other staff or community members, District staff must use their PPS provided email address and other communication systems and may not use private messaging. District employees who wish to use social media as a tool to assist them in their professional position must maintain separate accounts for professional and personal social media use and may follow or accept requests to connect from ~~current~~ students only through their professional social media presence established consistent with the requirements set forth in the Social Media Administrative Directive 8.60.045-AD.

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- The use of group text messaging has become a convenient tool for coaches and other staff working with students to relay information. Staff District employees and third-party contractors shall use this method of communication only with both District approval and parental knowledge. Text messages to individual students shall contain only information with a legitimate educational purpose.

➤ 5. IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS

- **One-on-one access to students:**

There will be times when staff members are alone with students to discuss legitimate educational issues, including discipline or academic performance, for example. When possible, staff should meet one-on-one with students in a public space, such as libraries, ~~or open classrooms,~~ or If this is not practical, ~~staff members should meet in places observable by others, such as offices or classrooms with windows and unlocked, ajar doors.~~ When supporting students with sensitive issues, as is common for staff such as counselors and social workers, it is appropriate to provide a private setting. To maintain transparency, it is also good

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practice to let others know when and where meetings with a student will occur. ~~e.g., giving notice of when students can come in for additional help.~~

- **Personal communication with students:**

~~While~~ Connecting with students and building rapport is an important component to the staff-student relationship, and staff should promote healthy relationships with all students.

~~We recognize that forming a relationship with students is an important aspect of teaching; however, staff should not engage in these discussions with students when its purpose is to meet the staff's personal needs rather than the student's needs. If a student initiates a discussion about a significant personal or family problem, staff members are encouraged to seek guidance from appropriate staff resources such as their principal or school counselors.~~

There are many times, ~~however,~~ when ~~the~~ a staff member's request for personal information is for a legitimate educational purpose. For example, personal reflection, relationships, or experiences are often part of a journaling exercise, and this policy is not intended to interfere or impede with this type of educational activity. ~~There are also times when it~~ is appropriate for staff to check in with students about their ~~well-being~~well-being. ~~For example, if a student has suffered a recent death in the family, it is completely appropriate for a staff member to inquire about how their doing~~ and/or whether they need any support with their school work. This policy does not prohibit that kind of healthy support of students.

If a student discloses information about the student's significant personal or family problems, staff members are expected to seek guidance from appropriate resources such as their principal or school counselor, as needed.

Staff members are also expected to bring their concerns to their supervisor's attention when ~~he/she has~~they have reason to believe a student is or may be becoming overly attached to or interested in them or other staff.

- **Traveling with or transporting students:**

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Coaches, chaperones, and other staff should take care when transporting students to athletic events and other extracurricular activities. Staff members needs to notify the District and the student's parent/guardian of the travel itinerary and may not transport students in a personal vehicle in a non-emergency situation without advance authorization by the District or as defined by the Coaches Handbook (<https://www.pilathletics.com/page/show/5161432-hs-coach-s-handbook>^[JB5]). (If an emergency situation arises that requires a staff member to transport a student without prior approval, the staff member shall alert a direct supervisor and the parent of the situation as soon as practicable.)

When traveling out of town, staff must follow the procedure outlined in the Field Trips Administrative Directive (6.50.011-AD). Staff is prohibited from entering a student's hotel room without another staff member or chaperone present, except in an emergency.

➤ a. Physical contact with students

Staff should not ~~touch students or~~ initiate any physical contact without a legitimate ~~educational purpose~~ such as public greetings, positive acknowledgment, or in a crisis. ~~Staff should not initiate hugs, touch student's torso or hair, or pat buttocks.~~ There are times when staff members have a legitimate educational purpose to initiate physical contact with a student, and noninvasive contact, such as "high fives" or fist bumps to acknowledge a job well done, ~~for instance,~~ are fine. ~~When students initiate hugs, receiving those hugs is permitted under this policy.~~ In other instances, staff members may be required to assist an injured student or a student with special needs who requires physical assistance. Likewise, staff members may need to touch a student's arms or hands to redirect them in an activity. Coaches, music teachers, and other instructors may have a need for physical contact as a method of instruction. Staff needs to be aware of a student's physical boundaries and limit physical contact to only that which is necessary for a legitimate ~~educational purpose~~. Any physical redirection of students must be pursuant to the District's Physical Restraint and Seclusion Administrative Directive 4.50.060-AD.

➤ • Respecting student privacy:

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Staff must honor a student's physical and emotional boundaries unless the interaction serves a legitimate educational purpose or is in response to an emergency.

For Examples;

Physical Surroundings: ~~s~~Staff members should not invade a student's privacy by entering a restroom, ~~or locker room,~~ or other space where a student may not be fully clothed ~~when a student is present~~ unless it falls within a staff member's regular job duties under an established written protocol, an emergency, or the staff needs to use the facility for a legitimate and intended purpose—*e.g.*, if it is not practical due to distances and time constraints to use a staff-only restroom.

Personal Space: Staff should respect a student's private space and be conscious of a student's cultural and personal boundaries when communicating—*e.g.*, staff members should be conscious of standing too close to students when interacting with them.

b. EXCEPTIONS-Exceptions

An emergency or a legitimate educational purpose may justify deviation from professional boundaries set out in this policy. Staff shall be prepared to articulate the reason for any exception from the requirements of this policy and must demonstrate that an appropriate relationship was maintained with the student at all times. Staff must ensure that any exception is narrowly tailored to the circumstances and must report it to their supervisor within 24 hours.

➤7. DUTY TO REPORT POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS

Staff shall discuss with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they suspect or are unsure whether their conduct, or the conduct of other staff, is inappropriate or constitutes a violation of this policy. If the staff member is dissatisfied with the response of the building administrator or supervisor, or does

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not feel comfortable discussing the situation with those individuals, ~~he/she/they~~ may bring it to the attention of the Chief of Human Resources. If the alleged behavior deals with harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the process in Policy No-4.30.060-P should be followed. The ~~d~~District will investigate all complaints.

Any ~~staff member~~ District employee who has reasonable cause to believe that another staff member has engaged in sexual conduct as defined by Administrative Directive Prohibition Against Employee Child Abuse and Sexual Conduct with Students 5.10.063-AD or sexual abuse as defined by statute shall immediately report this behavior to their school compliance officer and to the District Title IX Director. Additionally, any ~~staff member~~ District employee or other mandatory reporter of abuse/neglect who has reasonable cause to believe that ~~another staff member~~ a child has been engaged in ~~abused~~ ~~with a student~~ must promptly fulfill the mandatory reporting requirements to law enforcement and the Department of Human Services and report the allegation to their principal or supervisor.

District ~~E~~employees whose conduct violates this policy or who fail to report violations of this policy, may face discipline and/or termination, consistent with the ~~d~~District's policies, ~~acceptable use agreement~~, and applicable collective bargaining agreement^{[UB6]S}, ~~as applicable~~.

Violations of this policy by volunteers or contracted service providers may result in a prohibition from working or serving on ~~school~~ District properties or with dDistrict students, -in school programs, ~~or, or~~ may result in contract cancellation. The District shall notify law enforcement of any potentially unlawful conduct, as appropriate.

Student/Parent and Guardian Reporting

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

➤8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-RETALIATION

Staff members ~~who are~~ making a report are specifically advised of the following:

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1. ~~Staff members~~ They are neither permitted nor responsible for investigating whether the conduct is inappropriate;
2. ~~Staff members~~ They are required to maintain confidentiality; and
3. ~~Staff members~~ They must directly notify a supervisor of the conduct.

Confidentiality protects both the student(s) and the staff member who is the subject of the report. Failure to maintain confidentiality may impede the investigation and foster untrue and potentially harmful rumors. False reports are regarded as a serious offense and may result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

The District prohibits retaliation against anyone who makes a good-faith report under this policy. Any ~~staff~~ District employee who retaliates against any complainant, reporter, or other participant in an investigation may be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

9. **-TRAINING**

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop an annual training for all staff and ensure ongoing review of procedures to support this policy.

History: 10/18

2019 Revised Draft 6/19, 6/24, 6/28, 7/10, 7/30, 8/1, 8/5, 8/7, 8/25