

EMPLOYEE CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

New Hanover County School employees hold positions of public trust and serve as role models for students. Through ethical behavior, system employees promote a vision of high expectations and continuous improvement for themselves as well as for students. Employees' conduct should be as such to protect their integrity and/or reputation and that of the school system. Employees shall be responsible for the integrity and consequences of their own actions. Employees engaging in any activity concerning the school system, particularly in relationships with students, parents, other employees, the public, vendors, and suppliers must exhibit the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and fairness and must follow all applicable Policies of the New Hanover County Board of Education.

All employees shall perform their jobs in a competent and ethical manner without violating the public trust, applicable law, policies, and regulations. They shall not knowingly be a party to or condone any illegal or improper activity. They shall promote equal employment opportunities, and in doing so, oppose any discrimination, harassment or other unfair practices. They shall not, directly or indirectly, seek or accept personal gain which would influence, or appear to influence, the conduct of their official duties. They shall not directly or indirectly use or threaten to use any official authority or influence in any manner that tends to discourage, restrain, interfere, coerce, or discriminate against any subordinate who in good faith reports, discloses, divulges, or otherwise brings to the attention of the administration, the Board of Education and/or the State Board of Education, or any other public agency authorized to take remedial action, any facts, information or grievance issue relative to actual or suspected violation of any law or policy regulating the duties of persons, organizations or groups serving the school system.

Social networking sites focus on building lines of communication between people who share similar interests and activities or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Most sites are internet based and typically provide e-mail, photograph, and instant messaging services. Though such sites are becoming engrained in the social fabric of our society, the Board believes few reasons exist for teachers, school administrators and all other employees to communicate with students on personally administered pages of social networking sites.

The Board also believes that numerous other preferred mediums of communication exist for teachers, administrators and all other employees to use to communicate with students rather than the use of social networking sites and that communication between employees and students should be appropriate in nature and shall follow all policies and ethical standards established for the proper communication between an employee and a student. Therefore, teachers, administrators and all other employees should not communicate directly with currently enrolled students on personally administered pages of social networking sites, unless the student is the employee's child, stepchild, grandchild, sibling, cousin, niece or nephew or unless the interaction is approved by the principal for educational reasons. The Superintendent or designee may limit social media interactions and communications between teachers, administrators, and all other employees, and currently enrolled students, when the Superintendent or designee believes such action is warranted.

It is neither practical nor possible to delineate all of the situations that could fall within the guidelines of this Policy; however, all professional employees shall follow the standards of professional conduct listed in both the [Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators](#) and [The Standards of Professional Conduct for North Carolina Educators](#). The absence of law, policy, regulation or practice does not relieve an employee from the responsibility to exercise the highest ethical standards at all times.

All employees shall adhere to the standards of conduct contained within this Policy. Failure to follow the standards shall subject the employee to investigation and possible disciplinary action by the administration, the Board of Education and/or the State Board of Education, up to and including dismissal. The willful breach of the standards established by this Policy, the [Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators](#) or [The Standards of Professional Conduct for North Carolina Educators](#), may subject a teacher or licensed employee to license suspension or revocation.

In compliance with federal laws, New Hanover County Schools administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

LEGAL REFS: Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators
The Standards of Professional Conduct for North Carolina Educators
CROSS REF: Policy 6084 Employee Conflict of Interest

ADOPTED: 03/03/98
REVISED: 08/02/11, 10/01/13