

## **EMPLOYEE/ STUDENT BOUNDARIES**

The Bishop's School's employees are expected and required to maintain professional relationships with students whether on campus or away from campus. This policy is equally applicable to volunteers and interns who work with students at the School. The goal of these boundaries is to safeguard students and employees and to guide healthy and appropriate relationships.

Some activities may seem innocent from an employee's perspective, but may be perceived as flirtatious, sexually suggestive or otherwise inappropriate from a student's or parent's perspective. In maintaining professional relationships, employees must be vigilant to avoid any conduct that is not a professional or appropriate employee/student interaction or could be perceived as not professional or not appropriate.

This policy is not intended to restrict positive and supportive relationships between employees and students, which are appropriate in an educational environment. This policy is intended to restrict and prevent employee/student interactions that could lead to, or may be perceived as, flirtatious, sexually suggestive or otherwise inappropriate.

The below are protocols and requirements employees must follow. These protocols and requirements are not an exhaustive list of prohibited employee conduct, but rather a general framework for describing inappropriate employee conduct that is prohibited.

- Employees must avoid creating excessive emotional attachments beyond the healthy employee/student relationship. Employees must use sound judgment as to how much information they share with students about their own personal life, not share information for their own personal emotional gratification, and must avoid sharing any information about romantic, sexual, or other types of private or sensitive information or other information that is inappropriate to share.
- Employees must avoid any sexual or romantic interactions or relationships with students. Dating and any other type of one-on-one social interaction between an employee and student are prohibited.
- Employee communication with students (e.g., notes, email, texts or other electronic exchanges or phone calls) must be professional in all respects.
- Employees are prohibited from making jokes, using slang, or making suggestive comments or innuendo of a sexual or discriminatory nature in communicating with students (or at any other time at work).
- If a student shares confidential information that could pose a threat to the student or others, employees have an obligation to and must notify the head of school, the head of middle school, the head of upper school or the dean of

students and if applicable, make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect in keeping with the School's child abuse reporting policy and mandated reporting laws.

- Employees are prohibited from discussing any personal alcohol or drug use, whether past or current, with students.
- When meeting with a student one-on-one, employees must balance potential privacy concerns with appropriate professionalism and should avoid meeting in locations that are closed off or not visible or accessible to others.
- Employees must act with transparency; any interaction with a student should be something an employee would feel comfortable saying or doing in front of that student's parents and the employee's supervisor.
- Employees are prohibited from buying or giving personal gifts to individual students in a context that lacks transparency or professionalism.
- Employees should consult their supervisor if a student is or seems to be pushing the employee's personal boundaries, attempting to establish an inappropriate relationship, or it appears another type of problem is beginning to emerge.
- Employees are expected to exercise their best professional judgment when meeting with students off campus. As often as possible, employees should meet students off campus only at pre-approved School activities with other individuals present. If employees meet with students alone off-campus (with an advisee for lunch, for example), they should ensure that their behavior is consistent with the intentions and requirements of this policy.
- Paid or unpaid, Bishop's students providing childcare for employees' own children can trigger potential conflicts of interest. The School cautions employees against asking Bishop's students to "babysit" for them. In the event, however, that an employee does engage a student or students to provide childcare for them, the following guidelines must be followed:
  - The employee must not be the teacher of record for the student or students at the time of engagement.
  - Any instance of real or perceived *quid pro quo* as a result of such transactions may result in an investigation by the School.

Bishop's does allow for the following exceptions to this policy:

- An emergency situation or a legitimate educational purpose may justify deviation from professional boundaries set out in this policy. The employee shall be prepared to articulate the reason for any deviation from the requirements of this policy and must demonstrate that the employee has maintained an appropriate relationship with the student.

- There may be circumstances where there is an appropriate pre-existing personal relationship between an employee and a student's family that exists independently of their employment at Bishop's (e.g., when their children are friends). This policy is not intended to interfere with such relationships or to limit activities that are normally consistent with such relationships. Employees are strongly encouraged to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to the nature of the activity.
- It is understood that adults may be involved in other roles in the community through civic, religious, athletic, scouting, or other organizations and programs whose participants may include Bishop's students. This policy is not intended to interfere with or restrict an adult's ability to serve in those roles; however, adults 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.

Employees must understand their own responsibility for ensuring they do not intentionally or unintentionally cross the protocols and requirements established in this policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established protocols and requirements does not alleviate employees from strictly complying with this policy and will be considered irrelevant for disciplinary purposes. As soon as an employee recognizes that they are in a difficult situation related to boundaries or has questions related to these protocols and requirements, the employee should consult the head of school, the head of middle school, the head of upper school or the dean of students. If any employee becomes aware of another employee failing to adhere to this policy, the employee must immediately report the matter to the head of school, the head of middle school, the head of upper school or the dean of students.