

## **STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS**

The RSU No. 5 Board expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators, and others to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their conduct with students. For the purposes of this policy, staff members also include school volunteers.

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual 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 expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

### **Unacceptable Conduct**

Examples of unacceptable conduct by staff members 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. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship;
- C. Associating with students in any situation or activity that includes the presence of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco or that could be considered sexually suggestive;
- D. Prompting students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships without a direct connection to the student's school performance or having a direct educational purpose. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to be supportive but to refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff;
- E. Sending students on personal errands;
- F. Sexual banter, allusions, jokes, or innuendos with students;
- G. Asking a student to keep a secret;

- H. Disclosing inappropriate personal, sexual, family, employment, or other private matters to one or more students;
- I. Addressing students with terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;
- J. Permitting students to address you by your first name, or in an overly familiar manner;
- K. Being alone with individual students out of the view of others without a specific educational purpose;
- L. Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home without prior notification to the school administration and the students' parents; (see note below)
- M. Visiting a student's home, unless on official school business; (see note below)
- N. Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by phone, email, texts, Instant Messenger or Internet chat rooms, social networking websites, or letters (beyond homework or other legitimate school business);
- O. Exchanging personal gifts (beyond the customary student-teacher gifts); and/or
- P. Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for meals or movies, shopping, traveling, and recreational activities) outside of school-sponsored events or except as participants in community activities. RSU No. 5 assumes no liability for such activities.

Note: It is understood that staff members who live in, or have friends in, the community and/or have children who have friends in the community may have reason to visit a student's home, or have a student visit at their home, without prior notice being given to school administration due to personal relationships, but no such visits or relationships should violate the spirit of this policy.

### **Reporting 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 are required to notify promptly the principal or Superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

**Disciplinary Action**

Staff violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Human Services and/or law enforcement in accordance with the Board's policy on Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.

**Dissemination of Policy**

This policy shall be included in all employee, student and volunteer handbooks.

Cross Reference:     ACAA - Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students  
                          GCSA - Staff Computer/Internet Use  
                          JLF - Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Adopted:         June 9, 2010  
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