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2
3 **PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND ABUSE**
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5 Alexandria City Public Schools is committed to providing its students with a safe and supportive
6 learning environment and to protecting its students from sexual misconduct and abuse. The
7 responsibility to protect students from sexual misconduct and abuse is shared by the School
8 Board, Superintendent, administrators, teachers, other ACPS employees, volunteers, parents,
9 state agencies, and law enforcement.
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11 Alexandria City Public Schools recognizes the importance of communication and interaction
12 between students and adults in student achievement, successful learning, and instruction. At the
13 same time, clear and reasonable boundaries for educator-student relationships are necessary to
14 protect students from sexual misconduct and abuse and to protect adults from misunderstandings
15 and false accusations.
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17 This policy applies to ACPS employees, school volunteers, employees of virtual school
18 programs (including but not limited to distance learning and on-line programs) and vendors
19 providing instructional services to students. In this policy, these individuals will be referred to as
20 “adults.”
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22 **Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Prohibited**
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24 Adults are prohibited from engaging in sexual misconduct and abuse of students, which includes
25 dating; making sexual advances; seeking romantic or sexual relationships; having conversations
26 of a sexual nature not related to the adult’s professional responsibilities; and sexual contact.
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28 **In-Person Communication and Interaction**
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30 Personal contact between adults and students must be nonsexual, appropriate to the
31 circumstances, and unambiguous in meaning. Adults should avoid the appearance of impropriety
32 in their interactions with students. Behaviors that can create an appearance of impropriety
33 include, but are not limited to:
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- 35 • Conducting ongoing, private conversations with individual students that are unrelated to
36 academics, school activities, or the well-being of students and that take place in locations
37 inaccessible to others;
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- 39 • Inviting a student or students for home visits without informing parents/guardians;
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- 41 • Visiting the homes of students without the knowledge of parents/guardians;
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- 43 • Inviting students for social contact off school grounds without the permission or
44 knowledge of parents/guardians; and
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- 46 • Transporting students in personal vehicles without the knowledge of parents or

47 supervisors.

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49 Employees and volunteers should respect boundaries consistent with their roles as educators,
50 mentors, and caregivers. Violations of these boundaries include:

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- 52 • Physical contact with a student that could be reasonably interpreted as constituting sexual
53 harassment;
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 - 55 • Showing pornography to a student;
 - 56 • Unnecessarily invading a student’s personal privacy;
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 - 58 • Singling out a particular student or group of students for personal attention and friendship
59 beyond the bounds of an appropriate educator/mentor-student relationship;
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 - 61 • Conversation of a sexual nature with students not related to the employee’s professional
62 responsibilities; and
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 - 64 • A flirtatious, romantic, or sexual relationship with a student.

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66 **Electronic Communication**

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68 Digital technology and social networking provide multiple means for educators and other ACPS
69 employees to communicate appropriately with students and personalize learning. Such
70 communication between adults and students must be transparent, accessible to supervisors and
71 parents/guardians, nonsexual, appropriate to the circumstances, unambiguous in meaning, and
72 professional in content and tone. Additional guidance is provided in School Board Policy GAC:
73 Employee Use of Social Media and the accompanying regulation GAC-R.

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75 As with in-person communications, educators and volunteers should avoid appearances of
76 impropriety and refrain from inappropriate electronic communications with students. Factors to
77 consider in determining whether an electronic communication is inappropriate include, but are
78 not limited to:

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- 80 • The subject, content, purpose, authorization, timing, and frequency of the
81 communication;
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 - 83 • Whether there was an attempt to conceal the communication from supervisors and/or
84 parents/guardians;
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 - 86 • Whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact
87 or a romantic relationship; and
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 - 89 • Whether the communication was sexually explicit.

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91 Adults must restrict one-on-one, electronic communications with individual students to accounts,

92 systems, and platforms that are provided by and accessible to Alexandria City Public Schools.

93
94 If an adult does not have access to a school division-approved communication account, system,
95 or platform and there is a time-sensitive or emergency, school-related matter that must be
96 communicated to students, the adult may use a personal communication account, system, or
97 personal social media to communicate this information. The adult must note the date, time, and
98 nature of the contact and make this information available to a supervisor upon request.

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100 Parents/guardians are encouraged to have access to their children’s social networking and digital
101 communications and to supervise their children’s use of these methods of communication.

102 103 **Reporting of Violations**

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105 School division employees are required to report any case of suspected sexual misconduct or
106 abuse to the building principal, who shall report such information to the Chief Human Resources
107 Officer. Employees who are not based in schools shall make such reports to the department head,
108 who shall in turn report to the Chief Human Resources Officer. This requirement is in addition to
109 the requirements for reporting cases of suspected child abuse or neglect under School Board
110 Policy GAE/JHG: Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting.

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112 In addition, employees are required to report suspected violations of this policy regarding in-
113 person and electronic communications with students to the building principal, who shall report
114 such information to the Chief Human Resources Officer. Employees who are not based in a
115 school are to immediately report suspected violations of this policy to their department head or
116 designee.

117 118 **Training**

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120 ACPS will provide training for employees and volunteers on the prevention of misconduct and
121 abuse. Contracts with virtual school programs and other vendors providing instructional services
122 to students will include a requirement that those adults will comply with this policy. Information
123 about this policy will also be disseminated to employees, volunteers, students and parents.

124 125 **Investigation and Consequences for Violations**

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127 The Director of Employee Relations or designee and authorities as appropriate, shall investigate
128 reports of suspected violations of this policy. Inadvertent and innocuous violations of this policy
129 provide opportunities for additional counseling and training. Appropriate formal disciplinary
130 procedures will follow violations of this policy when the substance of the conduct or
131 communication in question is found to be inappropriate, flirtatious, romantic, or sexual. In the
132 case of termination of employment for sexual misconduct or abuse, the school division will
133 notify the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Consistent with the Virginia Department of
134 Education Guidelines, Alexandria City Public Schools will disclose to other school divisions
135 seeking references any formal reprimands or dismissals for violating this policy.

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137 **Adopted:** November 5, 2015

139 **Legal Refs.:** Code of Virginia [§ 22.1-253.13:7](#), [§ 22.1-296.1](#), [§ 22.1-291.3](#), [§ 22.1- 296.2](#),
140 [§ 22.1-296.4](#), [§ 63.2-1509](#)

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142 [Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Abuse in Virginia](#)
143 [Public Schools Approved by the Board of Education March 24, 2011](#)

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146 Cross Ref: GAC Employee Use of Social Media
147 GAC-R ACPS Social Media Regulations
148 GAE Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting (also JHG);
149 GAE-R Regulations on Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting (also JHG-R);
150 GBA Prohibition Against Harassment and Retaliation;
151 GB-R/GBA-R-Procedures for Investigating Complaints of Discrimination and
152 Harassment (also JFHA-R)

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ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS