

Employee Ethics and Conduct

Section A - Introduction

All District employees are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships, to demonstrate integrity and honesty, to be considerate and cooperative, and to maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students, parents, staff members, and others. Any employee who sexually harasses a student, willfully or negligently fails to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/), engages in grooming as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25, engages in grooming behaviors as defined below, violates boundaries for appropriate school employee-student conduct, or otherwise violates an employee conduct standard will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

In addition, the *Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators*, adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education, is incorporated by reference into this policy and shall be adhered to by all educators as defined in the applicable administrative regulations.

The Superintendent or designee shall identify appropriate employee conduct standards and provide them to all District employees. Standards related to school employee-student conduct shall, at a minimum:

1. Incorporate the prohibitions noted in paragraph 1 of this policy;
2. Define grooming behaviors to include, at a minimum, *sexual misconduct*. *Sexual misconduct* is (i) any act, including but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, (ii) by an employee with direct contact with a student, (iii) that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Examples of these prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:
 - a. A sexual or romantic invitation;
 - b. Dating or soliciting a date;
 - c. Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog;
 - d. Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student;
 - e. Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature; and
 - f. A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student
3. Identify expectations for employees to maintain professional relationships with students, including expectations for employee-student boundaries based upon students' ages, grade levels, and developmental levels. Such expectations shall establish guidelines for specific areas, including but not limited to:
 - a. Transporting a student;
 - b. Taking or possessing a photo or video of a student; and

- c. Meeting with a student or contacting a student outside the employee's professional role.
4. Reference employee reporting requirements of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.), and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7926).
5. Outline how employees can report prohibited behaviors and/or boundary violations pursuant to Board policies 2070 Policy - Uniform Grievance Procedure, 6700 Policy - Abused and Neglected Child Reporting, and 2080 Policy - Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure.
6. Reference required employee training related to educator ethics, child abuse, grooming behaviors, and boundary violations as required by law and policies 2080 Policy - Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure, 6550 Policy - Awareness and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Grooming Behaviors, 6600 Policy - Staff Development Program, and 6700 Policy - Abused and Neglected Child Reporting.

Section B - Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators (23 Ill.Admin.Code Part 22)

1. Responsibility to Students: The Illinois educator is committed to creating, promoting, and implementing a learning environment that is accessible to each student, enables students to achieve the highest academic potential, and maximizes their ability to succeed in academic and employment settings as a responsible member of society. Illinois educators:
 - a. Embody the Standards for the School Support Personnel Endorsements (23 Ill.Admin.Code Part 23), the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (23 Ill.Admin.Code Parts 24 and 130), and Standards for Administrative Endorsements (23 Ill.Admin.Code Part 29), as applicable to the educator, in the learning environment;
 - b. Respect the inherent dignity and worth of each student by assuring that the learning environment is characterized by respect and equal opportunity for each student, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language or socio-economic status;
 - c. Maintain a professional relationship with students at all times;
 - d. Provide a curriculum based on high expectations for each student that addresses individual differences through the design, implementation, and adaptation of effective instruction; and
 - e. Foster in each student the development of attributes that will enhance skills and knowledge necessary to be a contributing member of society.
2. Responsibility to Self: Illinois educators are committed to establishing high professional standards for their practice and striving to meet these standards through their performance. Illinois educators:
 - a. Assume responsibility and accountability for their performance and continually strive to demonstrate proficiency and understanding of current trends in both content knowledge

- and professional practice;
- b. Develop and implement personal and professional goals with attention to professional standards through a process of self-assessment and professional development;
 - c. Represent their professional credentials and qualifications accurately; and
 - d. Demonstrate a high level of professional judgment.
3. **Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession:** The Illinois educator is committed to collaborating with school and district colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning. Illinois educators:
- a. Collaborate with colleagues in their respective schools and districts to meet local and State educational standards;
 - b. Work together to create a respectful, professional, and supportive school climate that allows all educators to maintain their individual professional integrity;
 - c. Seek out and engage in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession;
 - d. Promote participation in educational decision-making processes;
 - e. Encourage promising candidates to enter the education profession; and
 - f. Support the preparation, induction, mentoring, and professional development of educators.
4. **Responsibility to Parents, Families and Communities:** The Illinois educator will collaborate, build trust, and respect confidentiality with parents, families, and communities to create effective instruction and learning environments for each student. Illinois educators:
- a. Aspire to understand and respect the values and traditions of the diversity represented in the community and in their learning environments;
 - b. Encourage and advocate for fair and equal educational opportunities for each student;
 - c. Develop and maintain professional relationships with parents, families, and communities;
 - d. Promote collaboration and support student learning through regular and meaningful communication with parents, families, and communities; and
 - e. Cooperate with community agencies that provide resources and services to enhance the learning environment.

5. Responsibility to ISBE: Illinois educators are committed to compliance with the School Code (105 ILCS 5/) and its implementing regulations, and to State and federal laws and regulations relevant to their profession. Illinois educators:
 - a. Provide accurate communication to ISBE concerning all educator licensure matters;
 - b. Maintain appropriate educator licensure for employment; and
 - c. Comply with State and federal laws and regulations.

All amendments to the Code of Ethics adopted in 23 Ill.Admin.Code Part 22 following the adoption of this policy are incorporated herein by reference.

Adopted: January 23, 2023