

**Policy No. 5253**
Personnel**MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL STAFF/STUDENT BOUNDARIES****Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide all staff, students, volunteers, School Board of Directors and community members with information about their role in protecting children from inappropriate conduct by adults. This policy applies to all district staff, School Board of Directors and volunteers. For purposes of this policy and its procedure, the terms “district staff,” “staff member(s)” and “staff” also include School Board of Directors and volunteers.

General Standards

The Sumner-Bonney Lake School District Board of Directors expects all staff members to maintain the highest professional standards in their interaction with students. Staff members are required to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning by maintaining professional boundaries.

Professional staff/student boundaries are consistent with the legal and ethical duty of care that district employees have for students.

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect, trust, and commitment to the professional boundaries between staff and students in and outside of the educational setting, and consistency with the educational mission of the District.

District Staff will not intrude on a student’s physical and emotional boundaries, such as conversations about sexual topics or the student’s engagement in antisocial behavior, unless the intrusion is necessary to serve a demonstrated educational purpose. An educational purpose is one that relates to the staff member’s duties in the district. Inappropriate boundary invasions can take various forms. Any type of sexual conduct with a student is an inappropriate boundary invasion.

Additionally, staff members are expected to be aware of the appearance of impropriety in their own conduct and the conduct of other staff when interacting with students. Staff should be particularly careful not to initiate or advance conversations with a student that identifies deeply held political or religious beliefs of the student or their parents, nor the student's sexual behavior or attitudes towards sex in a broad meaning, nor critical appraisals of the student's close family members, nor income (except to determine eligibility for financial aid). Staff members will notify and discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they suspect or question whether their own or another staff member’s conduct is inappropriate or constitutes a violation of this policy.

The Sumner-Bonney Lake School District Board of Directors recognizes that staff may have familial and pre-existing social relationships with parents or guardians and students. Staff members should use

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appropriate professional judgment when they have a dual relationship to students to avoid violating this policy, the appearance of impropriety, and the appearance of favoritism. Staff members shall proactively discuss these circumstances with their building administrator or supervisor.

Use of Technology

The Sumner-Bonney Lake School District Board of Directors supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, when the communication is unrelated to school work or other legitimate school business district staff are prohibited from communicating with students by phone, e-mail, text, instant messenger, or other forms of electronic or written communication. District staff members are prohibited from engaging in any conduct on social networking websites that violates the law, district policies or procedures, or other generally recognized professional standards. This prohibition includes prohibiting staff from “friending” and/or “following” students on social media.

Staff whose conduct violates this policy may face discipline and/or termination, consistent with the district’s policies and procedures, acceptable use agreement and collective bargaining agreements, as applicable.

The superintendent or designee will develop staff protocols for reporting and investigating allegations and develop procedures and training to accompany this policy.

Cross References: 3205 – Sexual Harassment of Students Prohibited 3207 – Prohibition
of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
3210 – Nondiscrimination

Legal References: Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment – 20 USC § 1232h Title IX of
the Education Amendments of 1972
RCW 9A.44 – Sex offenses
RCW 9A.88 – Indecent exposure – Prostitution
RCW 28A.400.320 - Crimes against children — Mandatory termination
of classified employees — Appeal — Recovery of salary or
compensation by district
RCW 28A.405.470 Crimes against children — Mandatory termination
of certificated employees — Appeal — Recovery of salary or
compensation by district
RCW 28A.405.475 Termination of certificated employee based on guilty
plea or conviction of certain felonies — Notice to superintendent of
public instruction - Record of notices
RCW 28A.410.090 Revocation or suspension of certificate or permit to
teach — Criminal basis — Complaints — Investigation – Process
RCW 28A.410.095 Violation or noncompliance — Investigatory powers



of superintendent of public instruction — Requirements for investigation
of alleged sexual misconduct towards a child — Court orders —
Contempt — Written findings required
RCW 28A.410.100 Revocation of authority to teach — Hearings Chapter
RCW 28A.640 - Sexual Equality
RCW 28A.642 - Discrimination Prohibition
RCW 49.60 – Washington State Law Against Discrimination
WAC 181-87 Professional certification - Acts of unprofessional conduct
WAC 181-88 Definitions of sexual misconduct, verbal and physical
abuse - Mandatory disclosure — Prohibited agreements