



# Maintaining Appropriate STAFF/STUDENT BOUNDARIES

*Guidelines to Avoid the Appearance of Impropriety*

Hillsboro School District employees are expected to know and understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate interactions with students. Employees must engage in appropriate interactions with students at all times and avoid any interactions that could appear inappropriate.

**APPROPRIATE** interactions create a safe environment for students to learn, grow, seek help in problem solving and conflicts, and develop social skills.

**INAPPROPRIATE** interactions cross boundaries by creating relationships that become equal rather than adult-to-child.

Staff who have frequent one-to-one contact with students or who work in co-curricular activities can be more at risk for inappropriate interactions with students or allegations of inappropriate interactions.

Offenders may be perceived by students and others to be the “best” staff members, are often popular with students and parents, and are frequently recognized for contributions.

## CHILD ABUSE/SEXUAL CONDUCT & DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

**Required information for employees (ORS-339.372):**

- Child abuse and/or sexual conduct by District employees (as defined below) will not be tolerated (Policy JHFE)
  - Child abuse includes: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and threat of harm
  - Sexual conduct includes any verbal or physical conduct by a school district employee that is sexual in nature, is directed toward a K-12 student, has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student’s educational performance, and creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. Examples listed under the “inappropriate interaction” sections of this brochure could constitute sexual conduct
- If an employee is found to have abused a child or engaged in sexual conduct toward a K-12 student, disciplinary records will be released in accordance with ORS 339.388.

## REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

All Hillsboro School District employees are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse immediately to law enforcement or the Department of Human Services/Child Welfare (DHS) (ORS 419B.010); Policy JHFE. Reporting obligations are in effect at all times.

Concerns involving child abuse and/or sexual conduct by District employees must be reported immediately to a supervisor or to Human Resources at 503-844-1500 (ORS 339.372). However, reporting to a supervisor alone does not fulfill an employee’s legal obligation; suspected child abuse must be also reported to law enforcement or DHS.

After reporting suspected abuse either by phone or in person, employees must complete the Child Abuse Record Form.

## HOW TO REPORT

You can report directly to your School Resource Officer (SRO) or call one of the following organizations:

- DHS/Child Welfare.....503-681-6917
- Hillsboro Police Department .....503-681-6190
- North Plains Police Department.....503-647-2604
- Cornelius Police Department.....503-359-1881
- Washington County Sheriff ..... 503-629-0111
- Oregon State Police.....503-378-3720

**If you suspect a child is in imminent danger, call ..... 9-1-1**

## EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE & INAPPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS

### PHYSICAL CONTACT

#### APPROPRIATE INTERACTION

- Occasionally patting a student on the back, shoulder or arm
- Exercising good judgment on whether to touch students and/or under what circumstances; being sensitive to individual preferences and cultural norms

#### INAPPROPRIATE INTERACTION

- Invading personal space; being too close in physical proximity
- Giving shoulder massage, lingering touches, squeezes, requesting affection, or touching private parts of a student
- Touching students who may misinterpret the touch due to individual circumstances, cultural standards, or developmental stage

### ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

#### APPROPRIATE INTERACTION

- Using the internet appropriately in compliance with Board policies IIBGA and GCAB
- Limiting electronic social media communication with students to what is necessary for educational and/or school-sponsored extracurricular activities

#### INAPPROPRIATE INTERACTION

- Conversing with students via electronic social media communication beyond what is necessary for educational purposes and/or school-sponsored extracurricular activities
- Discussing personal issues with students via text messaging, social networking sites, email, etc.
- Adding students on personal social networking sites as “friends” when not related to a legitimate educational purpose

### PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

#### APPROPRIATE INTERACTION

- Dialoguing about the academic environment and school activities
- Having a conversation that supports a student’s learning and growth, where the student’s perspective is the focus of conversation
- Maintaining personal space and reasonable eye contact

#### INAPPROPRIATE INTERACTION

- Making comments that are physical in nature (e.g. “you have great legs,” “you should wear that sweater more often”) or may have sexual overtones
- Discussing or condoning inappropriate topics and/or making comments with sexual overtones or flirting
- Communicating to the student with implied, inside messages that are unknown by the general population
- Sharing personal and confidential information in which the adult becomes the focus of the conversation
- Having any dialogue that makes the student feel uncomfortable or makes the student a confidant of the adult
- Maintaining intense eye contact

### RELATIONSHIPS

#### APPROPRIATE INTERACTION

- Conducting student conferences in a manner consistent with educational purpose
- Having staff/student relationships centered on academics, school events, and activities
- Notifying administration if a student is suspected of having romantic feelings toward a staff member
- Maintaining fair and equal treatment of all students
- Referring serious student problems to the appropriately trained professional

#### INAPPROPRIATE INTERACTION

- Spending time alone with a student in conferences beyond educational expectations
- Meeting with students off-campus
- Transporting a child alone and/or in a private vehicle when it is not a regular function of the employee’s assigned job duties
- Receiving or writing personal communication from/to student and/or giving gifts
- A pattern of covering or providing excuses for particular students, and/or writing passes repeatedly for favored students to cover tardies or absences
- A pattern of giving special privileges or showing favoritism to a particular student
- Extracurricular and co-curricular activity leaders encouraging or condoning an atmosphere of loose and inappropriate boundaries around gender and harassment issues
- Intervening in serious student problems instead of referring the student to an advisor or counselor
- Failing to notify administration if a student is suspected of having romantic feelings toward a staff member