

Webster Groves School District Code of Conduct: Involving Interactions with Children and Youth

The Webster Groves School District is committed to the safety and protection of children and youth. This Code of Conduct, along with the Webster Groves School District's Board policies ([GBH](#)- Staff/Student Relations and [JHG](#)- Reporting and Investigating Child Abuse and Neglect) and procedures applies to all personnel and volunteers of the Webster Groves School District who interact with students.

The public and private conduct of Webster Groves School District's personnel and volunteers of the Webster Groves School District can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must always be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work.

All members of our school district community have a responsibility to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning through consistently and fairly applied discipline and the maintenance of physical and emotional boundaries with students. We should be aware of our own and other persons' vulnerability, especially when working alone with students, and be particularly aware that we are responsible for maintaining physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in such interactions. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviors with those for whom we have responsibility and care. This includes but is not limited to, manipulation, seductive speech, jokes or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses. We are to provide safe environments for students at all times, regardless of the student's age or the location of the activity.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially students, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration. Webster Groves School District personnel and volunteers are prohibited at all times from using corporal punishment ([JGA-2](#)- Corporal Punishment). In times of student physical crisis (when unable to defuse anxious, hostile, or violent behavior through verbal de-escalation techniques), restraints should only be utilized by appropriately trained staff and in alignment with policy ([JGGA](#)- Seclusion and Restraint).

Physical contact with students can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. One-on-one meetings with a student are best held in a public area; in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with the door left open, and another Webster Groves School District personnel or supervisor is notified about the meeting. ([GBH](#)- Staff/Student Relations)

We must intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that a student is being maltreated in any way. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to the Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division at 1-800-392-3738 as described in the Webster Groves School District's Board policies and District procedures ([JHG](#) Reporting and Investigating Child Abuse and Neglect).

District personnel and volunteers must maintain boundaries as outlined in policy [GBH](#), these include, but are not limited to: refraining from providing, using and/or possessing illegal drugs, nicotine/THC products, and/or alcohol when working with students. In addition, district personnel and volunteers should not accept or give gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents or guardians. ([GBEBA](#)- Drug Free Workplace Policy and [GBH](#)- Student/Staff Relations)

Communication with students by district personnel and volunteers is only allowed for educational purposes. This means a purpose associated with the staff member's duties in the district including, but not limited to: instruction, counseling, the treatment of a student's physical injury, or coordination of an extracurricular activity, depending on the staff member's job description. For the protection of all concerned, the key safety concept that will be applied to these interactions is transparency. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between staff, volunteers, and students:

- Communication between Webster Groves School District Staff/Volunteers and students that is outside the role of educational purposes is prohibited.
- Email exchanges between a student and Webster Groves School District Staff/Volunteers must be made using a Webster Groves School District email address or district approved platforms. Staff and volunteers who use text messaging or any form of online communications, including social media, to communicate with students may only do so for educational purposes through Webster Groves School District accounts.
- Electronic communication that takes place over Webster Groves School District's network may be subject to periodic monitoring.

If a child discloses abuse to you, you observe child abuse or neglect or have reasonable suspicion, you must immediately call the MO Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-392-3738. After you have made a report to the hotline, you will need to notify your supervisor as soon as possible. If a student is in immediate danger, call 911.

The organizational contact for questions or concerns about this Code of Conduct can be directed to:

- Direct Supervisor
- Building Administrator
- Director of Learning Support Services
- Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
- Assistant Superintendent for Learning



Contact information for these points of contact can be found at:

<https://www.webster.k12.mo.us/Domain/4232>

The Webster Groves School District will not discharge or in any manner retaliate or discriminate against any person who, in good faith, submits a report to the MO Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, expresses a concern, or reports a breach of any of the behaviors contained in this Code.

All incidents will be reviewed by the Webster Groves School District in coordination with Children's Division and Law Enforcement where a hotline call has been made. Where a breach of this Code has been reported, but no hotline call has been made because there is no reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect, the report will be investigated by the Director of Learning Support Services or Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. The employee/volunteer reporting the incident will be informed of the outcomes within the confines of the law.

Thank you for partnering with the Webster Groves School District to ensure the safety of all of our children.

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