

Policy Regarding Employee-Student Interactions

Urban School is committed to creating a safe, supportive, and healthy school environment dedicated to the welfare of everyone in the community. As part of this commitment, Urban sets expectations for employee interactions with students in its Employee-Student Interactions policy which is included both here and in Urban's Employee handbook.

While the School encourages close, supportive relationships between students and school faculty and staff, all adults must maintain appropriate boundaries between themselves and students to ensure that they avoid even the perception of inappropriate conduct or favoritism. Some activities may seem innocent from an employee's perspective but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from the perspective of a student or parent/guardian. It is also important for the school to maintain a school-wide culture and practice in which students, faculty, staff and administrators understand that their responsibility to report misconduct will be met with support and sensitivity without fear of retaliation. The purpose of the guidelines below is to give direction regarding appropriate conduct and boundaries between adults and students, but the expectations for conduct set forth in this policy are not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of requirements, limitations, or prohibitions on staff conduct and activities established by the School.

Social Media

- Urban sets high standards for appropriate online communication.
- Employees should exercise care in setting appropriate boundaries between their personal and public online behavior.
- Employees may not include current students as "friends," "followers" or any other similar technology used by various sites.
- Use good judgment about any content that is shared on social media sites if your community includes parents, alums or other members of the Urban community.

Maintaining Healthy Boundaries With Students And Alums

– Current Students

- Any personal involvement between an employee and a student beyond the professional adult to student relationship is prohibited.
- Similarly, all sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, expressions of "romantic" interest, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature are prohibited.
- Employees must be cautious and mindful about appearances as situations can be misinterpreted by others. They need to be cautious and vigilant for their own protection and the safety of our students.
- Employees should only use school email to communicate with parents, students and alums. They should not use their personal email.
- Employees should not text individual students. They should use group text technology such as Remind (for all daily school interactions, field trips and grade level trips) and WhatsApp (for global trips).

- All communication must be professional and should not include information about an employee's personal life. Employees may not seek emotional involvement with a student for the adult's benefit.
- Employees may not give gifts to an individual student that are of a personal or intimate nature.
- Employees may not meet individual students outside of the school day.
- Employees should not intentionally be alone with a student on campus when an appropriate public or visible space is available.
- Employees should not take individual students out of the building to meet with them. Groups of students are fine. If they must go for a walk with a student for mental health or confidentiality reasons, they should walk in a public place such as the Panhandle path.
- Employees should not drive individual students alone without prior approval from parents/guardians (emergencies are an obvious exception).
- Employees should be aware that the intent of any physical contact, including hugging, can be misconstrued.

– Alums

- Employees should not reach out or invite alums between the ages of 18 and 21 to meet with them.
- If an alum reaches out to an employee and wants to meet, the employee should do so at Urban and/or bring another teacher/adult with them.
- Employees should be cautious and mindful about appearances as situations can be misinterpreted by others.
- Employees should only use school email to communicate with alums. They should not use their personal email.
- Employees should not text individual alums between the ages of 18 and 21. Above 21, they should be mindful of context and appearances.
- All communication must be professional and should not include information about an employee's personal life.

Duty to Report

We encourage community members and require all faculty and staff to report concerns about appropriate boundaries between an adult and a student to the Head of School (dmiller@urbanschool.org) or the Assistant Head of School for Student Life (cworseley@urbanschool.org). In some circumstances, employees will also have the duty to report such conduct in accordance with mandated reporter requirements. All reports will be kept as confidential as possible except as necessary for Urban to take appropriate action. Urban will not retaliate against anyone who reports conduct that may violate our school policies.