

Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries with Students

Guidelines

Adults shall establish and maintain appropriate personal boundaries with students and not engage in any behavior that is prohibited by this policy or that creates the appearance of prohibited behavior.

Prohibited Conduct

Romantic or Sexual Relationships -

Adults shall be prohibited from dating, courting or entering into or attempting to form a romantic or sexual relationship/interaction with any student enrolled in the district, regardless of the student's age. Students of any age are not legally capable of consenting to romantic or sexual interactions with adults.

Prohibited romantic or sexual interaction involving students includes, but is not limited to:

1. Seeking the romantic affections of, or entering into or attempting to form a dating, romantic or sexual relationship.
2. Sexual physical contact.
3. Romantic flirtation, propositions or sexual remarks.
4. Sexualized dialogue.
5. Personal comments about a student's body.
6. Sexual jokes, notes, stories, drawings, gestures or pictures.
7. Spreading sexual or romantic rumors.
8. Touching a student's body or clothes in a sexual or intimate way.
9. Accepting massages, or offering or giving massages other than in the course of injury care legitimately administered by an athletic trainer, coach or health care provider.
10. Restricting a student's freedom of movement in a sexually intimidating or provocative manner.
11. Displaying or transmitting sexual objects, pictures or depictions.

Social Interactions -

In order to maintain professional boundaries, adults shall ensure that their interactions with students are appropriate.

Examples of prohibited conduct that violates professional boundaries include, but are not limited to:

1. Disclosing inappropriate personal, sexual, family, employment concerns or other private matters to one or more students.
2. Exchanging notes, emails or other communications of a personal nature with a student without a legitimate educational reason.
3. Requesting a student's telephone number or other personal ways to communicate with the student not specifically approved;
4. Contacting a student on the student's personal phone or electronic device without specific approval in advance from the parent/guardian and principal;
5. Allowing a student to use the adult's personal cell phone or other personal electronic device without a legitimate educational reason.
6. Contacting a student on the student's personal social media account;
7. Following, joining, or commenting on a student's and/or group's social media account without legitimate educational purpose.
8. Giving personal gifts, cards or letters to a student without a legitimate educational reason.
9. Touching students without a legitimate educational reason. (Reasons could include the need for assistance when injured, a kindergartner having a toileting accident and requiring assistance, appropriate coaching instruction or appropriate music instruction).
10. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention or friendship beyond the ordinary professional adult-student relationship.
11. Taking a student out of class without a legitimate educational reason.
12. Being alone with a student behind closed doors or in a motor vehicle without a legitimate educational reason.
13. Leaving school premises with a student without a legitimate educational reason and approval from the parent/guardian and the student's building principal.
14. Eating a meal with and/or purchasing food or drink for a student, unless directly related to a pre-approved curricular activity or in connection with a legitimate educational activity approved in advance by the student's building principal.

15. Initiating or extending contact with a student beyond the school day or outside of class times without a legitimate educational reason.
16. Sending or accompanying a student on personal errands.
17. Inviting a student to the adult's home without a legitimate educational reason and without prior express authorization from the student's parent/guardian, and, in the case of a District employee, the employee's immediate supervisor.
18. Going to a student's home without a legitimate educational reason and without prior express authorization from the student's parent/guardian, and, in the case of a District employee, the employee's immediate supervisor.
19. Taking a student on outings without prior notification to and approval from both the parent/guardian and the building principal.
20. Giving a student a ride alone in a vehicle in a nonemergency situation without prior notification to and approval from both the parent/guardian and the building principal or supervisor. If circumstances are such that the parent/guardian is not available to request approval and a student has no other option to be transported, then District employees may provide a student a ride after notifying and receiving approval from the building principal or supervisor and notifying the parent/guardian after the fact.
21. Addressing students or permitting students to address adults with personalized terms of endearment, pet names or otherwise in an overly familiar manner.
22. Telling a student personal secrets, sharing personal secrets with a student or asking students to keep any conversation, gift or activity a secret.
23. For adults who are not guidance/counseling staff, psychologists, social workers or other adults with designated responsibilities to counsel students, encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, the student should be referred to the appropriate school resource.
24. Furnishing alcohol, drugs or tobacco to a student or being present where any student is consuming these substances.
25. Engaging in harassing or discriminatory conduct prohibited by other district policies or by state or federal law and regulations.

Electronic Communications

As with other forms of communication, when communicating electronically, adults shall maintain professional boundaries with students.

Electronic communication with students shall be for legitimate educational reasons only.

When available, District-provided email or other District-provided communication devices or platforms shall be used when communicating electronically with students. The use of District-provided email or other District-provided communication devices or platforms shall be in accordance with District policies and procedures. See the section “Group Messaging for Sports and Other Activities” below for situations when the possibility of immediate and/or urgent contact with students by District employees is necessary.

Prohibited Electronic Communications

Improper and/or inappropriate electronic communication between adults and students is prohibited, regardless of whether the adult or the student initiates the communication. Improper and/or inappropriate electronic communication includes but is not limited to any type of message that may be viewed as:

- Derogatory;
- Sexual, lewd, pornographic, or obscene in content;
- Offensive through the use of profanity;
- Threatening or harassing;
- Discriminatory;
- Facilitation of illegal activities;
- Having the purpose to assist personal causes or for-profit ends;
- Expression of political viewpoints;
- Unauthorized or illegal distribution, reproduction, or use of copyrighted materials;
- Fraternization or otherwise crossing the line between professional and personal boundaries; and/or
- Suggestive in nature.

District employees are prohibited from using personal email, text messaging, instant messaging, and social-networking accounts, websites, and any other applications for communicating with parents/guardians and students that are not specifically authorized.

District employees shall not accept requests for current students to be friends or connections on non-District sponsored social networking accounts or school-related groups and shall not create any networking site for communication with students other than those provided by the District for this purpose, other than as part of an administrative investigation into potential student or employee misconduct.

Under no circumstances may an adult create or maintain an external non-District student social media account. Furthermore, adults are not expected to follow or oversee external non-District student social media accounts. However, any adult following an external non-District student account is restricted from commenting or directly communicating with a student via the external non-District student social media account.

Group Messaging for Sports and Other Activities

The use of electronic or digital messages may be a form of electronic communication that is especially valuable in certain contexts when the possibility of immediate and/or urgent contact with students by District employees is necessary. Such contexts include but are not limited to the following:

- District employee coaches of District sports who need the ability to quickly reach student athletes and team members,
- District employee advisors of extra-curricular programs or activities who need the ability to quickly reach student participants, and
- District Employees chaperoning District field trips who need the ability to monitor the locations of students.

If a District employee plans to communicate with students through the use of electronic or digital messages, including text messages, the District employee must obtain permission to do so from the student's parent/guardian and the building principal using the form attached as Attachment A.

All electronic communications from coaches and advisors to team or club members shall be sent in a single communication to all participating team or club members, except for communications concerning an individual student's medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the communications will be copied to the building principal. In the case of sports teams under the direction of the Athletic Director, such medical or academic communications shall also be copied to the Athletic Director.

Exceptions

An emergency situation or a legitimate educational reason may justify deviation from the rules regarding communication or methods for maintaining professional boundaries set out in these Administrative Regulations. The adult shall be prepared to articulate the reason for any deviation from the requirements of these Administrative Regulations and must demonstrate that they have maintained an appropriate relationship with the student.

In any circumstance where a District employee communicates with or receives communication from a student without having obtained the necessary permission(s) in advance, which shall be expected only in emergency or other infrequent circumstances supported by legitimate educational reasons, the District employee initiating or receiving the communication must immediately, or as soon as is practicable thereafter, notify the building principal or their immediate supervisor in writing. Failure to complete such reporting shall be considered a violation of these Administrative Regulations and will result in the application of appropriate discipline.

Under no circumstance will an educational or other reason justify deviation from the "Romantic and Sexual Relationships" section of these Administrative Regulations.

There will be circumstances where personal relationships exist or develop between an adult and a student's family, e.g. when their children become friends. These Administrative Regulations are not intended to interfere with such relationships or to limit activities that are consistent with such relationships. Additionally, where a personal or family friend-type relationship exists between an adult and a student or their family and the adult relies on the existence of such relationship to justify deviation from the professional boundaries, the adult has the burden, and is expected and shall be prepared to demonstrate that the student's parent/guardian had:

- (1) actual knowledge of personal/family-friend relationship;
- (2) actual knowledge of the conduct (including the scope and extent of the conduct) deviating from the professional boundaries set forth in these Administrative Regulations; and
- (3) consented to the conduct deviating from the professional boundaries detailed in these Administrative Regulations.

It is understood that many adults are involved in various other roles in the community through nondistrict-related civic, religious, athletic, scouting or other organizations and programs whose participants may include District students. Such community involvement is commendable, and these Administrative Regulations are not intended to interfere with or restrict an adult's ability to serve in those roles; however, adults are strongly encouraged to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to the nature of the activity with regard to all youth with whom they interact in the course of their community involvement.

Reporting Inappropriate or Suspicious Conduct

Any person who is aware of or suspects a violation of these Administrative Regulations or has concerns about or is uncomfortable with a relationship or interaction between an adult and a student, shall promptly notify the Superintendent, building principal or Title IX Coordinator.

The District's Title IX Coordinator is the Director of Equity and Public Programs. Contact information for the Director of Equity and Public Programs is outlined below.

Position: Director of Equity and Public Programs

Address: Tredyffrin/Easttown School District Administration Offices, 940 West Valley Road, Suite 1700, Wayne, PA 19087

Email: morrisk@tesd.net

Phone: 610-240-1909

All District employees, independent contractors and volunteers who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse, shall immediately report the suspected abuse, in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board Policy.

An educator who knows of any action, inaction or conduct which constitutes sexual abuse or exploitation or sexual misconduct under the Educator Discipline Act shall report such

misconduct to the Pennsylvania Department of Education on the required form, and shall report such misconduct to the Superintendent, Title IX Coordinator and immediate supervisor, promptly, but not later than fifteen (15) days following discovery of such misconduct.

If the Superintendent or designee reasonably suspects that conduct being reported involves an incident required to be reported under the Child Protective Services Law, the Educator Discipline Act or the school safety and security provisions of School Code, the Superintendent or designee shall make a report, in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board Policy.

Individuals who make good faith reports of potential or actual violations of these Administrative Regulations shall not be subject to retaliation, discipline or other adverse action.

It is a violation of Board Policy to retaliate against any person for reporting any action pursuant to these Administrative Regulations or for participating as a witness in any related investigation or hearing.

Investigation

The Title IX Coordinator shall promptly assess and address allegations of inappropriate conduct in accordance with the procedures for reports of discrimination/harassment.

It is understood that some reports made pursuant to these Administrative Regulations will be based on rumors or misunderstandings; the mere fact that the reported adult is cleared of any wrongdoing shall not result in disciplinary action against the person making the report or any witnesses. If as the result of an investigation any individual, including the reported adult, the person making the report or a witness is found to have knowingly provided false information in making the report or during the investigation or hearings related to the report, or if any individual intentionally obstructs the investigation or hearings, this may be addressed as a violation of these Administrative Regulations and other applicable laws, regulations and Board Policies.

Disciplinary Action

A District employee who violates these Administrative Regulations may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with all applicable district disciplinary policies and procedures.

A volunteer, student teacher, or independent contractor or an employee of an independent contractor who violates these Administrative Regulations may be prohibited from working or serving in District schools for an appropriate period of time or permanently, as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

Training

The District shall provide training with respect to the provisions of these Administrative Regulations to current and new District employees, volunteers and student teachers.

The District, at its sole discretion, may require independent contractors and their employees who interact with students or are present on school grounds to receive training on these Administrative Regulations and related procedures.

Any person with questions or concerns regarding these Administrative Regulation or the accompanying Board Policy, including whether particular conduct or activity is permissible under these Administrative Regulation or the accompanying Board Policy, is encouraged to direct their concerns to the Director of Assessment and Accountability or the applicable building principal.

References:

Board Policy No. 4150 “Insurance Protection - Employees Using Their Own Automobiles”

Administrative Regulation No. 5420 “Harassment of Students by Nonstudents”

Board Policy and Administrative Regulation No. 5436 “Reporting Suspected Child Abuse”

School Code — 24 P.S. Sec. 510, 1302.1-A, 1303-A

State Board of Education Regulations — 22 PA Code Sec. 10.2, 10.21, 10.22 Educator Discipline Act — 24 P.S. Sec. 2070.1a et seq.

Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators — 22 PA Code Sec. 235.1 et seq.

Child Protective Services Law — 23 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 6301 et seq.

Adopted: February 23, 2017

Revised: March 16, 2017

Revised: October 6, 2020

Revised: August 31, 2021

Revised: September 2, 2025

Revised: June 8, 2026

Tredyffrin/Easttown School District
Attachment A

**Consent and Approval Form for District Employee to Communicate with Students through
Electronic or Digital Messages in Designated Activity**

This form provides you with written notice of the District's request to communicate with your child through electronic or digital messages. Parental/guardian permission, as well as permission from the building principal, must be obtained in writing in order for a District employee to engage in such communication.

Student Name: _____

School: _____

Designated Activity (Extra-Curricular Activity/Club/Sport/Field Trip):

Expected Dates of Communication: _____

Check as many as are applicable

_____ I give my permission for my child's cell phone number to be shared with and used by the following District employee(s) in connection with the Designated Activity:

District Employees:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

_____ I give my permission for my child's cell phone number to be shared with other students and District employees who are associated with the group-related activity.

Name of Parent or Guardian: _____
(please print)

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Student's Cell Phone Number: _____

Date: _____

Approval of Building Principal: _____