1700 Adult/Student Interaction Policy
Approved: May 13, 2009
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The Board of Directors of Altus Schools San Diego, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation operating Altus Schools Charter School of San Diego hereafter referred to as "Charter School" or "School", hereby adopts this Staff/Student Interaction Policy.

The Charter School recognizes its responsibility to make and enforce all rules and regulations governing student and adult behavior to bring about the safest and most learning-conducive environment possible. This policy applies to all School employees, volunteers, contractors, and governing board ("Board") members[1] (collectively referred to as "adults" herein).

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is the purpose of this policy to provide additional specificity to the standards of conduct embodied in the Charter School code of ethics-related rules and regulations so that staff members clearly understand the prohibitions and behavior boundaries which must govern their conduct towards students.

The rules of conduct set forth in this Policy are not intended to serve as an exhaustive delineation of requirements, limitations, or prohibitions on staff conduct and activities established by this school. Rather, the components of this Policy serve to

(1) Alert adult about some of the more sensitive and often problematic matters involved in faculty/adult student relationships.
(2) Specify boundaries related to potentially sexual situations and conduct—the crossing of which is contrary to accepted norms of behavior and in conflict with the duties and responsibilities of adults.
(3) Provide adults with clear guidance in conducting themselves in a manner that reflects high standards of professionalism. (It is important for Charter School to maintain a school-wide culture in which students and adults understand their responsibilities to report sexual misconduct without fearing that school leaders will betray them if they do. In order to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation, students and adults must know that the administration will investigate reports about possible misconduct.)
(4) Clarify that improper action will have significant consequences.
(5) Provide an environment that empowers students to identify actions that appear to have crossed boundaries.
(6) Define the process that Charter School will use for addressing potential improper conduct.
(7) Preserve student and staff privacy rights (to the extent possible, practicable, and/or required by law) during any pending investigation.

II. BACKGROUND AND GENERAL POLICY PROVISIONS

[1] This policy does not apply to student board members under Education Code 47604.2, or otherwise.

Actions by adults that are inconsistent or in conflict with the values established by Charter School can harm students, other adults, and the school's operation; therefore, such actions are unacceptable. It is the policy of this school that all school adults conduct themselves at all times in a manner that reflects the ethical standards consistent with the rules contained in this Policy and otherwise proclaimed by this school.

The provisions herein are intended to guide all Charter School adults toward conduct that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of them while defining interaction boundaries with students.

Misconduct by an adult disrupt the education of other students, sidetrack the instructional focus of the school, and harm the school's legitimacy—all of which threaten the school's future ability to recruit skilled professionals and maintain a credible operation in the eyes of the community. It is critical that adults study this Policy thoroughly and behave in ways to avoid even the appearance of misconduct.

While all boundaries and/or situations cannot be addressed in a single policy, the issues delineated herein are among those that can be most problematic for adults and among those that can have the greatest potential for a negative impact on this school and its community. Staff members should seek guidance in their daily conduct from established policies, procedures, and directives as well as through the guidance and recommendations of school leadership. Although this Policy gives specific, clear direction, it is each adult's obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents, students, colleagues, or school leaders.

III. BOUNDARIES

A. Boundaries Defined

For the purposes of this Policy, the term "boundaries" is defined as acceptable professional behavior by an adult while interacting with a student, whether during school hours or outside of school hours, including through social media platforms, text messaging, and other forms of communication that do not otherwise include a student's parent/guardian. Trespassing the boundaries of a student/adult relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of trust.

Professional boundaries apply not only between students and staff, volunteers, and contractors, and Board members, but also among and between students, and among and between adults employed, volunteering, or under contract with the School. All members of the School community are expected to maintain professional conduct that models appropriate behavior and fosters a safe and respectful learning environment. Additionally, all facilities/areas under School control shall be effectively supervised to promote a safe environment for students and individuals performing services on behalf of the School.

B. Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior

Some activities may seem innocent from an adult's perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parent/guardian point of view. The objective

of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between adults and students but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as,sexual misconduct.

Adults must understand their own responsibilities for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this Policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for any required disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is critical that all staff study this Policy thoroughly and apply the lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors to their daily activities. Although sincere, professional interaction with students fosters the charter mission of implementing "personalized, education programs to facilitate student achievement," student/adult interaction has boundaries regarding the activities, locations, and intentions.

Unacceptable Staff/Student Behaviors (Violations of this Policy)

This list, and any subsequent lists, are not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather illustrative of the types of behavior addressed by this Policy.

1. Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal and intimate nature.
2. Kissing of ANY kind.
3. Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation.
4. Intentionally being alone with a student away from the school.
5. Making, or participating in, sexually inappropriate comments.
6. Sexual jokes, or jokes/comments with sexual double-entendre.
7. Seeking emotional involvement (which can include intimate attachment) with a student beyond the normative care and concern required of an educator.
8. Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented.
9. Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student.
10. Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.
11. Communications with students via an employee's personal accounts, such as email and/or social media.

Unacceptable Staff/Student Behaviors without Parent and Supervisor Permission
(These behaviors should only be exercised when a reasonable and prudent person, acting as an educator, is prevented from using a better practice or behavior. Staff members should inform their supervisor of the circumstance and occurrence prior to or immediately after the occurrence.)

1. Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities.
2. Being alone in a room with a student.
3. Allowing students in your home.

Cautionary Staff/Student Behaviors

(These behaviors should only be exercised when a reasonable and prudent person, acting as an educator, is prevented from using a better practice or behavior. Staff members should inform their supervisor of the circumstance and occurrence prior to or immediately after the occurrence.)

1. Remarks about the physical attributes or physiological development of anyone.
2. Excessive attention toward a particular student.
3. Sending e-mails, text messages, social media responses, or letters to students if the content is not about school activities.

Acceptable and Recommended Staff/Student Behaviors

1. Getting parents' written consent for any after-school activity on or off campus (exclusive of tutorials).
2. Obtaining formal approval (site and parental) to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
3. E-mails, text-messages, phone conversations, and other communications to and with students must be professional and pertain to school activities or classes. (Communication should be initiated via school-based technology and equipment.)
4. Keeping reasonable space between you and your students.
5. Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries.
6. Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student.
7. Keeping all discussions with students professional.
8. Asking for advice from senior staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries.
9. Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with a student.
10. Informing your supervisor and/or Support Team (coordinators and directors) about situations that have the potential to become more severe.
11. Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later.
12. Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students and/or co-workers.
13. Asking another staff member to be present if you will be alone with any student who may have severe social or emotional challenges (and you are not the assigned case educator).
14. Asking another staff member to be present, or within close supervisory distance, when you must be alone with a student.
15. Giving students praise and recognition without touching them in questionable areas; giving fist bumps, high-five's, and handshakes are appropriate
16. Keeping your professional conduct a high priority during all moments of student contact.
17. Asking yourself if any of your actions which go contrary to these provisions are worth sacrificing your job and career.

I. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student.

For purposes of this Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to property.

For clarification purposes, the following examples are offered for direction and guidance of Charter School personnel:

A. Examples of PERMITTED actions (NOT corporal punishment)

1. Stopping a student from fighting with another student;
2. Preventing a pupil from committing an act of vandalism;
3. Defending yourself from physical injury or assault by a student;
4. Forcing a pupil to give up a weapon or dangerous object;
5. Requiring an athletic team to participate in strenuous physical training activities designed to strengthen or condition team members or improve their coordination, agility, or physical skills;
6. Engaging in group calisthenics, team drills, or other physical education or voluntary recreational activities.

B. Examples of PROHIBITED actions (corporal punishment)
1. Hitting, shoving, pushing, or physically restraining a student as a means of control;
2. Making unruly students do push-ups, run laps, or perform other physical acts that cause pain or discomfort as a form of punishment;
3. Paddling, swatting slapping, grabbing, pinching, kicking, or otherwise causing physical pain.

II. REPORTING

When any employee reasonably suspects or believes that another adult may have crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, they must immediately report the occurrence or suspected occurrence to a supervisor and/or Support Team member promptly. <u>All reports shall be as confidential as possible under the circumstances. It is the duty of the administrator to investigate and thoroughly report the situation. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness or concern of student behavior that crosses boundaries or where a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse, child abuse, or neglect.</u>

III. INVESTIGATING

A supervisor and/or Support Team member will promptly investigate and document the investigation of any allegation of inappropriate conduct per this Policy, using such support staff or outside assistance as he or she deems necessary and appropriate under the

circumstances. Throughout this fact-finding process, the investigating administrator, and all others privy to the investigation, shall protect the privacy interests of any affected student(s) and/or adult(s), including any potential witnesses, to the extent practical and appropriate under the law The investigating supervisor shall promptly notify the Supervising Administrator that an investigation is in progress; the Supervising Administrator, in turn, shall notify the Deputy Superintendent School Services of the existence and status of any investigations. Upon completion of any such investigations, the Supervising Administrator shall direct the investigating administrator to report to the Deputy Superintendent School Services any conclusions reached. The investigating administrator may consult with Charter School legal counsel, as appropriate, prior to, during, and after conducting any investigation.

IV. CONSEQUENCES

Adults who have violated this Policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, and, where appropriate, will be reported to authorities for potential legal action.

V. TRAINING

This document shall be discussed with and acknowledged by all Charter School employees as part of their initial employment and again, on an annual basis, as part of on-going training for all Charter School employees. A copy of this acknowledgement will be placed into each Charter School employee's personnel folder. In addition, appropriate portions of this Policy and related information will be incorporated into on-going Charter School communications thrust to underscore the continuing importance that Charter School places on student/staff interaction.