Regional School Unit 5
Durham · Freeport · Pownal

"Empower and equip every learner with skills, curiosity, character, and purpose to thrive and live fulfilling lives in an ever changing world"

Tom Gray, Superintendent of Schools
Kelly Wentworth, Director of Finance & Human Resources
Mandy Lewis, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Elisha Morris, Director of Instructional Support

TO: Colin Cheney, Kara Kaikini, Chris Savaiano

CC: Jill Hooper

FROM: Tom Gray, Superintendent

DATE: September 24, 2026

RE: Policy Meeting – October 1, 2026

The Policy Committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, October 1, 2026 at 4:15 p.m. via Google Meet at the following link: https://meet.google.com/dkc-hazi-wqy
Or dial: (US) +1 929-266-2152 PIN: 109 349 631#

Agenda:

1. Law Change:
   JLF - Child Abuse Reporting, Prevention and Education (revisit from Sept. meeting)

2. Regular Review:
   AD - Educational Mission and Vision
   BEC - Executive Sessions (Review)
   BEC - R - Executive Session Law (Review)
   GBEBB - Staff Conduct with Students
   JICIA - Weapons, Violence and School Safety

3. Board Request:
   N/A

RSU No. 5 | Policy Committee Briefing

JLF- Child Abuse Reporting, Prevention and Education (revisit from Sept. Meeting)

Upon request from the committee, new language was added as Section III, Paragraph F, to delineate the employee's responsibilities and the designated agent's responsibilities. The language was drafted by the superintendent and reviewed by counsel. It appears in the new working sample highlighted in yellow.

AD- Educational Mission and Vision

This is updated with the new language from the revised RSU 5 Strategic Plan.

BEC- Executive Sessions and BEC-R (Executive Sessions Law)

These are brought forward for regular review with no changes recommended.

GBEBB- Staff Conduct With Students

What Remains the Same

Both policies establish expectations for professional and ethical conduct, identify inappropriate staff-student relationships and interactions, encourage staff to seek guidance when uncertain, require staff to report potential violations, and provide for disciplinary action and referrals involving abuse.

Key Changes in the Sample

Area	Difference from Current RSU 5 Policy
Professional boundaries	Adds explicit recognition that staff and their children may have relationships with student families outside school, provided professional boundaries are maintained and parents/guardians know about interactions with their children.
Prohibited conduct	Expands and clarifies examples of prohibited behavior, including overly familiar terms of address, allowing students to use first names or nicknames, discussing personal or family matters, and non-school-related communications with students.

Digital communication	Specifically prohibits friending, following, or interacting with students through social media or digital applications outside school-approved activities. It also addresses communications about non-school matters through texts, calls, letters, and other means.
Activities requiring prior consultation	Adds a separate expectation that staff review certain activities with a building administrator or supervisor beforehand. Examples include being alone with a student out of public view, transporting students, home visits, personal gifts, socializing outside school-sponsored activities, and taking photos or recordings for personal purposes.
Reporting violations	Retains the expectation that students and families report concerns, while requiring staff to promptly notify the Superintendent or building administrator if they become aware of a potential violation.
Disciplinary action and state reporting	Changes disciplinary language from violations "may result" in discipline to "shall result" in discipline, up to and including termination. Adds specific language regarding notification to the Maine Department of Education when a credential holder is disciplined, suspended, terminated, or leaves employment during a covered investigation.
Dissemination	Directs the Superintendent to determine how the policy is distributed to staff and volunteers and specifically requires inclusion in student handbooks.

Additional Considerations

The sample includes optional language prohibiting staff from communicating with students using privately owned electronic devices. RSU 5's current policy restricts certain personal contact but does not contain this specific prohibition. The Committee should determine whether to include this restriction or address it through related technology policies.

The sample also contains more specific expectations for advance consultation with administrators. These provisions represent a shift from general guidance toward clearer procedural expectations for staff.

JICIA: Weapons, Violence and School Safety

What Remains the Same

Both policies establish expectations for a school environment free from violence and threats, prohibit weapons and other harmful conduct, require staff to report prohibited behavior, and provide for disciplinary action, firearm-related expulsion, law enforcement referrals, and protections for students with disabilities.

Key Changes in the Sample

Area	Difference from Current RSU 5 Policy
Reporting and scope	Adds volunteers to the staff reporting requirement and explicitly encourages students who experience or observe prohibited conduct to report it.
Prohibited conduct	Adds discharge of a firearm within 500 feet of school property, stalking, blocking access to school property or facilities, and additional language addressing threats and violence.
Weapons exceptions	Reorganizes the exceptions and places Board approval and safeguards at the center of authorized instructional activities.
Disciplinary response	Explicitly authorizes restorative interventions and/or discipline based on the facts of each case. The sample also clarifies that expulsion is available as permitted by law.
Firearm-related expulsion	Clarifies that the one-year firearm expulsion requirement applies to bringing or possessing a firearm at school, with any modification by the Superintendent made in writing on a case-by-case basis.
Notification team/confidentiality	The sample omits RSU 5's existing section on notification teams, information sharing, and confidentiality when a student is identified

as posing a safety concern. This is a significant difference that warrants careful review before adopting the sample.

Additional Considerations

The sample includes an optional psychological evaluation/risk assessment section, authorizing the Superintendent to request an evaluation in certain circumstances, at district expense. This is not included in the sample's required core language. The sample also updates the policy's cross-references and legal references.

The key consideration is how clearly the policy defines administrators' authority to question and search students, the circumstances under which searches may occur, and the balance between school safety and student privacy.

CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT REPORTING, PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

I. DEFINITIONS

A. Child abuse or neglect. Child abuse or neglect is defined by Maine law as:

i. a threat to a child's health or welfare by physical, mental or emotional injury or impairment, sexual abuse or exploitation. ~~[statutory references omitted] deprivation of essential needs~~ or lack of protection from these by a person responsible for the child;

ii. Serious harm or threat of serious harm by a person responsible for the child due to inadequate care or supervision of the child or deprivation of food, clothing, shelter, education or medical care necessary for the child's health or welfare by that person when that person is financially able to provide food, clothing, shelter, education or medical care necessary for the child's health or welfare or is offered lawful and reasonable financial means or resources to do so;

iii. Truancy (for a child who is either 1) age 5 and under age 6 and who has been voluntarily enrolled in school; or 2) six years of age and has not completed grade six, if a child described in 1) or 2) has the equivalent of seven full days of unexcused absences or five consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year) when the absence is the result of the neglect by a person responsible for the child.

iv. "a threat to a child's health or welfare caused by child sex trafficking by any person, regardless of whether or not the person is responsible for the child."

B. Person responsible for the child. A "person responsible for the child" means a person with responsibility for a child's health or welfare, whether in the child's home or another home; ~~or~~ a facility which, as part of its function, provides for the care of the child; or a person licensed or subject to licensure that, as part of its function, provides for care of the child. It includes the child's parent, guardian or other custodian.

C. Child Sex Trafficking. Child sex trafficking means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a child for the purposes of a commercial sex act.

II. EMPLOYEES' DUTY TO REPORT

A. Any employee of the school unit (hereinafter referred to as the "notifying employee") who has reason to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected must immediately; ~~notify the building administrator.~~

i. Notify the building administrator, and

ii. Whenever possible, make a report directly to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in consultation with the Superintendent or building administrator. If the notifying employee is unavailable to make the report, the Superintendent or building administrator shall make the report.

~~B. In addition to notifying the building administrator, the Notifying employees may also make a report directly to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or the District Attorney if required (Section III.B provides further information about reporting to DHHS and District Attorney).~~

~~C. If the notifying employee does not receive written confirmation from the building administrator/Superintendent within 24 hours of their notification that a report has been made to DHHS (and the District Attorney if required) the employee shall make an immediate report directly to DHHS and, if the person suspected is not a person responsible for the child, to the District Attorney. In such cases, the employee shall then complete a copy of the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Form (JLF-E) in consultation with the building administrator or Superintendent.~~

~~D. If the notifying employee does receive written confirmation from the building administrator/Superintendent within 24 hours of their notification as described in section III.D on the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Form (JLF-E), they shall sign the form as acknowledgement that the report was made and return it to the building administrator/Superintendent.~~

~~E. Any volunteer who has reason to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected is also expected to make a report to the building administrator, and may also make a report directly to DHHS, and the District Attorney if required (see Section III.B).~~

~~F. Electronic reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect through the DHHS-approved reporting portal is permitted.~~

Notifying employees may make reports independently to DHHS. All reports must be made to DHHS within twenty-four (24) hours of the notifying employee acquiring knowledge of potential child abuse or neglect.

B. Any school volunteer who has reason to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected is also expected to make a report to the Superintendent or building administrator and/or directly to DHHS within twenty-four (24) hours of the school volunteer acquiring knowledge of potential child abuse or neglect.

III. Designated Agent's REPORTING AND CONFIRMATION DUTIES

All building administrators and the Superintendents are designated agents to make child abuse ~~and~~ or neglect reports.

A. If a building administrator suspects abuse or neglect or receives such a ~~the~~ report from an employee, they shall notify the Superintendent immediately.

B. ~~The Superintendent or building administrator~~ A designated agent (in consultation with the notifying employee whenever possible, as outlined above) shall then ~~make an immediate report~~ ensure that an immediate report is made by telephone of suspected abuse or neglect to DHHS. DHHS must be notified within twenty-four (24) hours of the school employee acquiring knowledge of potential child abuse or neglect.

i. In addition, if the person suspected of abuse or neglect is not the parent, guardian, or other custodian of the child, the ~~Superintendent/building administrator~~ designated agent may, in consultation with the notifying employee, ~~shall~~ also make a verbal report to the appropriate ~~District Attorney~~ district attorney's office.

~~C. The law requires the notifying employee to make their own report to DHHS and the District Attorney if required, if they have not received confirmation within 24 hours that such a report has been made by the Superintendent or building administrator.~~

C. The ~~person making the report to DHHS and/or the District Attorney~~ notifying employee and designated agent shall complete the Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Form (see JLF-E) ~~in consultation with the notifying employee.~~

~~D. The Superintendent or building administrator shall provide a copy of the Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Form to the notifying employee within 24 hours of the employee's initial report. The notifying employee shall sign the report and return it to the Superintendent or building administrator.~~

E. The form ~~will be forwarded to DHHS and to the District Attorney if required, and~~ shall be retained by the school unit for ten (10) years, ~~as specified in the Maine Archives Rules,~~ along with any other information relevant to the case.

F. Delineation of Duties. The notifying employee's and the designated agent's duties under this Section and Section II are distinct and are summarized as follows:

Notifying Employee — must:
• Immediately notify the building administrator upon reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect;
• Whenever possible, also report directly to DHHS, in consultation with the Superintendent or building administrator;
• If unable to make the report directly to DHHS, confirm, within twenty-four (24) hours, that the designated agent has made the required report to DHHS; and
• If unable to make the report directly to DHHS and if no written confirmation is received that the designated agent made a report within twenty-four (24) hours, the notifying employee will personally make the report to DHHS and complete the JLF-E form in consultation with the building administrator or Superintendent.

Designated Agent (Building Administrator/Superintendent) — must:
• Upon receiving notice from an employee, notify the Superintendent immediately (if the building administrator is not the Superintendent);
• Ensure that an immediate report is made by telephone to DHHS within twenty-four (24) hours of the employee acquiring knowledge of potential abuse or neglect, and, when the suspected person is not the child's parent, guardian, or custodian;
• Provide the notifying employee with written confirmation, within twenty-four (24) hours, that the report has been made if the notifying employee was not with the designated agent when the report was made;
• Complete the JLF-E form in consultation with the notifying employee, provide the employee a copy, and forward the form to DHHS (and the District Attorney if required); and
• Retain the JLF-E form and related records for ten (10) years in accordance with the Maine Archives Rules.
In short: the notifying employee's duty is to notify and, if necessary, to independently ensure a report reaches DHHS/the District Attorney when confirmation is not received; the designated agent's duty is to make (or ensure the making of) the official report (by either confirming the notifying employee has made the report or by the designated agent making the report themselves and informing the notifying employee they have done so), and complete and retain the required documentation.

IV. INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

A. Employees. If the person suspected of abuse or neglect is an employee, the Superintendent/designee shall investigate and take appropriate action, in accordance with applicable Board policies, collective bargaining contracts, and federal and state laws.

B. Students. If the person suspected of abuse or neglect is a student, and the abuse or neglect occurred on school premises, during a school activity, or is otherwise related to the school, the Superintendent/designee shall investigate and take

appropriate action, in accordance with applicable Board policies and federal and state laws.

C. School officials should attempt to coordinate investigations with DHHS and law enforcement to the extent possible, in light of the school's obligation to protect the safety and security of the school environment. ~~Unless there are extenuating circumstances~~ When reasonably possible, any internal interviews of a child who may have been abused or neglected will be conducted by a person who has knowledge of appropriate techniques for interviewing alleged victims of abuse or neglect.

V. INTERVIEWS OF CHILD AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL

DHHS personnel shall be permitted to meet with and interview the child named in the report when the child is present at the school as provided in this section. The building administrator or designee shall:

A. Require the DHHS employee requesting to interview the child to provide written certification that in the Department's judgment, the interview is necessary to carry out its duties;

B. Require the DHHS caseworker to discuss the circumstances of the interview and any relevant information regarding the alleged abuse or neglect with the child's teacher or school counselor or the school nurse, social worker or building administrator, as the caseworker determines is necessary to provide needed emotional support to the child prior to and following the interview;

C. Not place conditions on how the interview is conducted, including, but not necessarily limited to requiring that certain persons be present during the interview; prohibiting certain persons from being present during the interview; ~~and~~ or requiring notice to or consent from a parent or guardian.

D. Provide an appropriate, quiet and private place for the interview; and

E. Not disclose any information about DHHS's intention to interview the child except to school officials or the school's attorney who need the information to comply with the interview request.

VI. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION AND RECORDS

All records, reports and information concerning alleged cases of child abuse ~~and~~ or neglect shall be kept confidential to the extent required by Board policies and applicable law.

The building administrator/designee is permitted to release a child's school records without prior consent of the parent/guardian to DHHS or law enforcement officials ~~as necessary~~ if, based on the totality of the circumstances, the school unit determines there is an articulable or significant threat to the health or safety of the child or other individuals and disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the child or other individuals.

VII. GOOD FAITH IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY; RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Any person who in good faith reports child abuse or neglect, assists DHHS in making the child available for an interview, or participates in the investigation or proceedings of a child protection investigation ~~is~~ will be immune from any criminal or civil liability for the act of reporting or participating in the investigation or proceeding. Good faith does not include instances when a false report is made and the person knows the report is false.

The school unit prohibits any retaliation against an employee who makes a good faith report of child abuse ~~and~~ or neglect in accordance with this policy.

VIII. CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION TRAINING FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

A. All school employees shall receive mandated reporter training approved by DHHS on child abuse/neglect ~~and reporting procedures~~ every ~~four~~ two (2) years ~~and within six months of hire~~ as required by law.

B. All school employees will receive a minimum of one hour of child sexual abuse awareness and prevention training within six months of hire and every two (2) years thereafter.

~~B.~~ C. The training about child sexual abuse awareness and prevention shall be delivered by a qualified instructor(s) and be "evidence-informed."

~~C.~~ D. The training about sexual abuse awareness and prevention is intended to:

i. Increase awareness of developmentally appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviors in children;
ii. Increase ability to identify indicators of sexual abuse, including physical and psychosocial indicators on a spectrum (including lower to higher probability);
iii. Increase ability to effectively respond to sexual behavior or disclosures or suspicions of child sexual abuse; and
iv. Include local child sexual abuse and sexual assault resources.

IX. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS

Students in public pre-~~kindergarten~~ school through grade 5 will receive child sexual abuse prevention education curriculum programs delivered by qualified instructors as part of the health education curriculum aligned with the Learning Results Health

Education Standards and follow an appropriate scope and sequence. The curriculum will be consistent with evidence-informed, age-appropriate child sexual abuse prevention education for students, and include:

A. Age-appropriate education regarding physical and personal boundaries, including biologically accurate body terminology;

B. ~~Help children~~ Age-appropriate education for children regarding identifying unsafe or uncomfortable situations including a range of feelings, touches or violations of physical boundaries;

C. ~~Help~~ Age-appropriate education for children regarding identifying safe adults with whom they could discuss unsafe or uncomfortable situations; and

D. ~~Helps~~ Age-appropriate education for children regarding identifying and developing skills to support a friend who may be experiencing unsafe or uncomfortable situations.

Legal Reference: 22 MRSA Chap. 1071, Child and Family Services and Child Protection Act
20 USC § 1232g, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
20-A M.R.S.A. § 5001-A
20-A M.R.S.A. § 254(18)

Cross Reference: ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
GBEBB - Staff Conduct with Students
JEA - Compulsory Student Attendance
JHB - Truancy
JLF-E –Suspected Child Abuse ~~and~~ or Neglect Report Form
JRA – Student Education Records and Information

Adopted: March 24, 2010
Reviewed: March 27, 2013
Revised: November 18, 2015; November 30, 2016; June 11, 2025
Revised:

EDUCATIONAL MISSION AND ~~VISION~~ WE BELIEVE STATEMENTS

~~**RSU No. 5 Mission:**~~
~~**To inspire and support every learner by challenging minds, building character, sparking creativity, and nurturing passions.**~~

~~**RSU No. 5 Vision:**~~
~~**Our Students:**~~
~~In RSU No. 5, learners become healthy, empathetic, and responsible citizens who contribute to their local and global communities. Students are creative problem solvers and critical thinkers who communicate effectively in an evolving world.~~

~~**Our Learning:**~~
~~RSU No. 5 responds to individual needs and prepares students to thrive in their personal and professional lives. Learning is personalized to challenge students and explore their passions. Students choose from a variety of diverse and engaging experiences, including opportunities for active, experiential, real-world learning.~~

~~**Our Culture/Community:**~~
~~In RSU No. 5, students learn in joyful environments that are physically and emotionally safe. The school culture fosters well-being, respect, and curiosity while challenging students with clearly defined and rigorous expectations. Partnerships involving parents and community inspire and support enriched learning for all students.~~

~~**Students graduate as compassionate, honest, and respectful citizens who learn and contribute to their communities for life.**~~

Mission:
Empower and equip every learner with skills, curiosity, character, and purpose to thrive and live fulfilling lives in an ever-changing world.



Cognitive Growth
We believe learning requires deep thinking, meaningful challenge, and the ability to reflect on and adjust one's approach to reach goals.

School Culture and Connection
We believe schools are welcoming, joyful, and hopeful communities where relationships, belonging, and engagement support every learner.

Real-World Relevance
We believe in creating opportunities for students to practice essential life skills, explore practical knowledge, consider diverse perspectives, and engage in community-based experiences that develop skills needed for life beyond school.

Emotional Intelligence and Character Building
We believe in fostering emotionally intelligent, flexible, responsible, and resilient learners who act with integrity, use strategies for emotional regulation, and embrace productive struggle as growth.

Systems and Sustainability
We believe in careful, responsible, forward-thinking stewardship of district resources that meet the changing needs of learners.

Legal Reference: TITLE 20-A MRSA SEC. 4511.3, A

Adopted: April 28, 2010
Reviewed: December 8, 2010
Reviewed: November 20, 2013
Revised: February 6, 2019

No suggested changes - Review

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

Except as provided by law, all meetings of the School Board shall be open to the public, and all persons shall be permitted to attend the meetings. The Board may hold executive sessions upon recorded vote of 3/5 of the members present and voting. Any motion to go into executive session shall indicate the precise nature of the business of the executive session and include a citation of one or more sources of statutory or other authority that permits an executive session for that business. Deliberations may be conducted in executive sessions only on those matters defined in the law. No final action shall be taken in executive session.

By its very nature, the subject matter of executive sessions is highly confidential. It is expected that all parties to such discussions will respect the need for confidentiality.

Legal Reference: 1 MRSA § 401 et seq.

Cross Reference: BE – Board of Directors Meetings
BEC-R - Executive Session Law

Adopted: October 28, 2009
Reviewed: February 16, 2011
Revised: January 22, 2014
Reviewed: January 22, 2020

No suggested changes - Review

EXECUTIVE SESSION LAW

I. To Enter Executive Session, a Board Must:

A. Start with a public meeting;

B. Have a public recorded vote of 3/5 of members present and voting; and

C. State in a motion the precise nature of the business of the executive session and include in the motion a citation of one or more sources of statutory or other authority that permits an executive session for that business. If more than one matter is to be discussed, the nature of each matter and the source(s) of authority for each must be stated. When labor contracts are the subject of an executive session, the parties must be named.

II. Restrictions During Executive Session

A. Only matters stated in the motion may be considered.

B. No official actions shall be finally approved.

C. No public record shall be kept.

III. Items Which May Be Discussed In Executive Session

A. Discussion or consideration of employment, appointment, assignment, duties, compensation, evaluation, resignation, disciplining, promotion, demotion or dismissal of public officials, appointees or employees or the investigation of charges or complaints against persons, subject to the following conditions:

1. Only when public discussion could be reasonably expected to cause damage to the reputation or violate the individual's right to privacy;

2. Person charged or investigated has right to be present;

3. Person charged or investigated may request in writing that the investigation be conducted in open session. Such requests must be honored; and

4. Any person bringing charges shall be permitted to be present (does not specify participation).

B. Discussion or consideration of suspension or expulsion of a student, the cost of whose education is paid from public funds. The student and legal counsel (and parents or guardian if student is a minor) shall be permitted to be present if student, parents or guardian so desire.

C. Discussion or consideration of the condition, acquisition or the use of real or personal property only if premature disclosure would prejudice the bargaining position of the body or agency.

D. Board discussion of labor contracts and proposals and meetings may be held in executive session. (Negotiations between the representatives of a public employer and public employees are closed unless opened by agreement of both parties.)

E. Consultations between a body or agency and its attorney concerning legal rights, pending litigation, and settlement offers, when premature public knowledge would give the Board substantial disadvantage.

F. Discussion of records made, maintained or received by the body or agency, when access by the general public is prohibited by statute.

Cross Reference: BEC - Executive Sessions
Legal Reference: 1 MRSA § 405

Adopted: October 28, 2009
Reviewed: February 16, 2011
Revised: January 22, 2014
Reviewed: January 22, 2020

STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

The RSU No. 5 Board expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, substitutes, counselors, administrators, and others to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their conduct with students. For the purposes of this policy, staff members also include school volunteers.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that the interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust; ~~an~~ that staff members understand~~ing~~ the importance of maintaining ~~of the~~ appropriate professional boundaries between adults and students in ~~and outside of the~~ an educational setting; and ~~consistency with the~~ that staff members conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the educational mission of the schools.

~~Staff members are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.~~

It is understood that staff members and their children may interact with and have friendships with the families of students outside of school. This policy is not intended to prohibit such interactions and friendships, provided that professional boundaries are maintained at all times and that parents/guardians have knowledge of the interactions between a staff member and their child(ren).

~~Unacceptable~~ Prohibited Conduct

Examples of unacceptable conduct by staff members that are expressly prohibited include, but are not limited to the following:

A. Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the Board's policy ~~on~~ ACAA - Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students;

B. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship;

C. For non-guidance/counseling staff, encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to be supportive and refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff for assistance.

~~C. Associating with students in any situation or activity that includes the presence of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco or that could be considered sexually suggestive;~~

~~D. Prompting students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships without a direct connection to the student's school performance or having a direct educational purpose. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to be supportive but to refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff;~~

~~E. Sending students on personal errands;~~

E. Sexual banter, allusions, jokes, or innuendos with students;

F. Asking a student to keep a secret;

G. ~~Disclosing inappropriate~~ Discussing personal, sexual, family issues, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students;

H. Addressing students with terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;

I. Permitting students to address you by your first name, nickname or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;

~~K. Being alone with individual students out of the view of others without a specific educational purpose;~~

~~L. Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home without prior notification to the school administration and the students' parents; (see note below)~~

~~M. Visiting a student's home, unless on official school business; (see note below)~~

J. ~~Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by phone, email, texts, Instant Messenger or Internet chat rooms, social networking websites, or letters (beyond homework or other legitimate school business);~~ "Friending" students, "following" students or engaging in any other interactions on social networking sites or through any digital applications (outside of school-approved activities). In the case of friendships between families, any contact with students on social media/digital applications must be with the knowledge of the parents/guardians;

K. Communicating with students on non-school matters via computer/electronic devices, text messages, social media messages, phone calls, letters, notes or any other means.

L. Communicating with students on a staff member's privately-owned computers, cell phones or other electronic devices.

~~O. Exchanging personal gifts (beyond the customary student-teacher gifts); and/or~~

~~P. Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for meals or movies, shopping, traveling, and recreational activities) outside of school-sponsored events or except as participants in community activities. RSU No. 5 assumes no liability for such activities.~~

~~Note: It is understood that staff members who live in, or have friends in, the community and/or have children who have friends in the community may have reason to visit a student's home, or have a student visit at their home, without prior notice being given to school administration due to personal relationships, but no such visits or relationships should violate the spirit of this policy.~~

Before engaging in the following activities, staff members are expected to review the activity with their building administrator or supervisor:

- Being alone with individual students out of public view.
- Driving students home or to other locations.
- Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home (unless the student's parents/guardians approve of the activity, such as when a student babysits or performs chores for a staff member).
- Visiting a student at home or in another location, unless on official school business known to the parent.
- Exchanging personal gifts (beyond customary student-teacher gifts).
- Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for meals or to movies, shopping, traveling, and recreational activities) outside of school-sponsored events or organized community activities.
- Taking photographs, videos or audio recordings of students for personal purposes or any purpose other than capturing images of school events or activities for school-related purposes.

Staff members are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

Reporting Violations

Students and/or their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the Superintendent or ~~principal~~ building administrator if they believe a teacher or other staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates this policy.

Staff members are required to ~~notify~~ promptly notify the ~~principal or~~ Superintendent or building administrator if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including ~~dismissal~~ termination. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Health and Human Services, the District Attorney and/or law enforcement ~~in accordance with the Board's policy on Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect~~. In addition, the Department of Education will be notified if a credential holder is disciplined, suspended or terminated for violations that endanger the health, safety or welfare of a student, or if a credential holder leaves their employment for any reason prior to the conclusion of an investigation of such a violation.

Dissemination of Policy

This policy shall be ~~included in all employee, student and volunteer handbooks.~~ Disseminated to staff and volunteers by means determined by the Superintendent. This policy shall also be included in student handbooks.

Cross Reference: ACAA - Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
GCSA - ~~Staff~~ Employee Computer and Internet Use
GCSA-R - Employee Computer and Internet Use Rules
JLF - Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Adopted: June 9, 2010
Reviewed: February 29, 2012
Revised: January 10, 2018

WEAPONS, VIOLENCE AND SCHOOL SAFETY

The RSU No. 5 Board of Directors believes that students and staff are entitled to learn and work in a school environment free of violence, threats and disruptive behavior. Students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with Board policies, school rules, reasonable unwritten behavior expectations, and applicable state and federal laws.

School staff are required to ~~report~~ immediately report incidents of prohibited conduct by students to the building administrator~~/designee~~ for investigation and appropriate action.

I. Prohibited Conduct

Students, staf and all other persons are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct on school property, while in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or at any time or place that such conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline or general welfare of the school:

A. Possession and/or use of articles commonly used as weapons or designed to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person. Examples of such articles include but are not limited to firearms, BB guns, pellet guns, any other kind of gun, ammunition, explosives, cross-bows, brass knuckles, switchblades, knives, chains, clubs, Kung Fu stars and numchucks;

B. Discharge of a firearm within 500 feet of school property;

B. Possession and/or use of any ~~object~~ article, although not necessarily designed to be a weapon, to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person. Examples of such articles include but are not limited to bats, belts, picks, pencils, compasses, objects capable of ignition (e.g., matches, lighters), files, tools of any sort, ~~and~~ any replica~~s of~~ weapon~~s~~ ~~(including toys)~~ or any toy or other item that bears a reasonable resemblance to an actual weapon or is capable of causing injury to another person (e.g. "gel blasters" and water pellet guns);

C. Violent or threatening behavior, including but not limited to fighting, assault and/or battery, taking hostages, threats to commit violence against persons or property (e.g., verbal or written death threats, threats of bodily harm, bomb threats) stalking or blocking access to school property or facilities;

D. Verbal or written statements (including those made ~~on or through a Computer~~ using computers or other electronic communications devices or technologies) which threaten, intimidate, or harass others, or which tend to incite violence and/or disrupt the school program; blackmail, extortion, or demands for money or property;

E. Willful and malicious damage to school or personal property;

F. Stealing or attempting to steal school or personal property;

G. Lewd, indecent or obscene acts or expressions of any kind;

H. Violations of the school unit's drug/alcohol and tobacco policies;

I. Violations of state or federal laws; and

J. Any other conduct that may be harmful to persons or property.

II. ~~Use of Other Weapons in Instructional Activities~~ Exceptions to Prohibition Against Possession and Use of Weapons on School Property

The prohibition on the possession and discharge of a firearm does not apply to law enforcement officials.

~~Nothing in this policy shall prevent the school system from offering instructional activities using objects other than firearms that are generally considered weapons (e.g., bows and arrows) or from allowing an object generally considered a weapon to be brought to school for supervised instructional activities (e.g., archery, boat building) approved by the Superintendent so long as the Superintendent has adopted appropriate safeguards to ensure student and staff safety.~~
~~Note: Firearms that are approved under Federal and State laws may be approved by the Superintendent.~~

~~Any proposal to introduce an instructional activity involving such objects must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent, who may make a recommendation to the Board. Such proposal must state the objectives of the activity and describe the safeguards that will be put in place to ensure student and staff safety.~~

~~No weapons or objects that are generally considered weapons may be used in instructional activities or brought to school for instructional activities unless the Superintendent/designee has given specific permission in advance.~~

III. ~~Disciplinary Action~~ Addressing policy Violations

Principals may ~~suspend and/or recommend expulsion of students who violate this policy based upon the facts of each case and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws~~ engage students in restorative intervention and/or discipline students who violate this policy, based upon the facts of each case and in accordance with applicable Board policies and state and federal laws. Conduct which violates this policy is deliberately disobedient and deliberately disorderly within the meaning of 20-A MRSA § 1001 (9) and will be grounds for expulsion, as permitted by law, if found necessary for the peace and usefulness of the school. Such conduct may ~~also~~ be grounds for expulsion under other provisions of 20-A MRSA § 1001 (9 and 9-A) that specifically prohibit the use and

possession of weapons, infractions of violence, and possession, furnishing and trafficking of scheduled drugs.

Students who are found to have brought a firearm ~~(as defined by federal law) to school~~, or to have possessed a firearm at a school (as both terms are defined by federal law), shall be expelled for a period of not less than one year, unless this requirement is modified by the Superintendent on a case-by-case basis in writing.

All firearms violations shall be referred to law enforcement authorities as required by law. Other violations of this policy shall be referred to law enforcement authorities at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Students with disabilities shall be disciplined in accordance with applicable federal and state laws/regulations and School Board Policy JKF

IV. ~~Notification Team/Confidentiality~~ Psychological Evaluation/Risk Assessment

~~Maine law authorizes law enforcement officers and criminal justice agencies to share with a superintendent or principal information pertaining to a juvenile when the information is credible and indicates an imminent danger to the safety of students or school personnel on school grounds or at a school function. Maine law requires the District Attorney to notify the superintendent when a juvenile is charged with use or threatened use of force or is adjudicated as having committed one or more juvenile crimes that involve the use or threatened use of force.~~

~~Within ten days or immediately if necessary for school safety, the Superintendent shall convene a notification team. The notification team must include the administrator/designee of the school building where the student attends, at least one classroom teacher to whom the student is assigned, a guidance counselor, and the student's parent/guardian. The notification team shall determine on this basis of need which school employees are entitled to receive information concerning allegations or adjudications of use or threatened use of force. Information received by the Superintendent/designee and disclosed to the notification team and/or disclosed to school employees is confidential and may not become part of the student's educational record.~~

~~The Superintendent shall ensure that confidentiality training is provided to all school employees who have access to this information.~~

The Superintendent is authorized to request a psychological evaluation of a student who violates this policy when, in the Superintendent's opinion, such an evaluation will assist in assessing the risk the student poses to school safety if the student were to remain in school or return to school after a suspension or expulsion.

All such evaluations shall be performed at the school unit's expense. If the parents/guardians and/or student refuse to permit a requested psychological evaluation, the Superintendent and the Board may draw any reasonable inferences from the student's

behavior concerning the risk the student poses to school safety for purposes of determining appropriate action.

Legal References: ~~20 USCA § 8921 (Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994)~~
5 MRSA §4681 et.seq.
15 M.R.S.A. §§ 3301-A; 3308(7)(E); 3009
17-A MRSA §§ 2(9); 2(12-A)
20 USCA § 7151 (Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990)
20 USC § 7961 (Gun-Free Schools Act)
20-A MRSA §§ 1001 (9); 1001 (9-A); 6552

Cross Reference: ACAA-Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
ADC-~~Tobacco Use and Possession~~ Tobacco-Free Schools: Use and Possession of Tobacco and Electronic Smoking Devices
EBCA-~~Crisis Response Plan~~ Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
JIC -System-Wide Student Code of Conduct
JICH-Drug and Alcohol Use by Students
JK-Student Discipline
JKD-Suspension of Students
JKE-Expulsion of Students
JKF-Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disabilities
JIH-Questioning and Searches of Students
KLG-Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

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