



706. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

PPSD POLICY

General Belief	The Providence School Board has a responsibility to establish policies that protect the safety and well-being of students and employees, and that create and maintain a safe, supportive, and positive learning environment and workplace. The Board affirms the responsibility of employees to abide by the standards of professional conduct, to act as role models for students at all times, and to promote the dignity, health, and safety of students. The Board further recognizes the importance of maintaining professional conduct and relationships in the workplace.
Purpose and Scope	The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and standards of conduct to ensure that the relationship between Providence Public School District (“PPSD” or “the District”) employees and students is professional and respectful, and to promote appropriate workplace behavior. This policy covers conduct that takes place both on and off District property, and both during and outside of the school day. The policy also pertains to all forms of communication that may occur between employees and students, at any time. This policy applies to District employees, as well as to District partners who work with or have contact with students.
Definitions	The following definitions are provided to assist in understanding this policy. Child Abuse: Harming or threatening to harm the physical or mental health or welfare of a child, and as further defined in Rhode Island General Law § 40-11-2. Dating: Dating includes, but is not limited to, a social appointment, or engagement, preplanned or not, in which the purpose is to initiate or continue an intimate personal relationship for personal pleasure or sexual gratification. District Employee: All District appointed personnel, pursuant to Providence Public School Board appointments. District Partner: District contractors, consultants, vendors, representatives from outside organizations, and volunteers who work in schools and/or have contact with students. Romantic and/or sexual relationship: A relationship in which individuals become involved to the point that there is dating, exchange of personal

	affection, intimate or sexually suggestive communication, emotional attachment, or any form of sexual or physical intimacy. Students: All individuals registered and enrolled as a student in the District, regardless of age.
Guidelines and Implementation Strategies	The Superintendent will develop administrative regulations to implement the Professional Conduct with Students policy. The regulations should address the following: 1) <u>Conduct with Students</u> The relationship between District employees/District partners and students must be of a professional nature at all times. District employees/District partners are encouraged and expected to foster positive and supportive relationships with students, recognizing students' unique abilities, talents, and challenges, and treating all students with dignity and respect. Appropriate personal boundaries must be established and maintained, and District employees/District partners must not engage in any behavior that could reasonably lead to the appearance of impropriety. Such conduct is prohibited regardless of the student's age, whether the student or the employee is the initiator of the behavior, and regardless of whether the student reciprocates the attention. Prohibited conduct applies to actions that take place both on and off District property, during and outside of the school day, and to all forms of communication that may occur between District employees/District partners and students, at any time, including on social media. Prohibited conduct by District employees/District partners includes, but is not limited to: a) Dating students. b) Flirting with students. c) Making romantically or sexually suggestive comments to or about students. d) Fostering, encouraging, or participating in inappropriate emotionally or socially intimate relationships with students. e) Socializing or initiating or continuing regular communication with students for reasons not directly related to official school matters. f) Providing drugs or alcohol to students or consuming drugs or alcohol in the presence of students. g) Discussing sexual matters outside of an appropriate educational context, including the use of sexual jokes, slang, or innuendo. h) Touching students punitively or touching students in any way that could be construed as romantic or sexually suggestive, including but not limited to intimately touching, fondling, or massaging. i) Intimate physical displays of affection. j) Accepting or giving inappropriate personal gifts.

	k) Meeting alone with a student in an area that is secluded or that is not openly accessible/visible to others, such as a room without windows or without visibility through a door. l) Romantic or sexual relations between District employees/District partners and students, including intimate kissing, communication of any kind that is intimate or sexual in nature, sexual intercourse. 2) <u>Reporting Prohibited Conduct with Students</u> Any District employee/District partner who has direct or indirect knowledge of prohibited conduct between a District employee/District partner and a student must immediately report the conduct to the Human Resources office. The Human Resources office will develop regulations for intake of reports of prohibited conduct with students, and investigation of such reports. Additionally, District employees/District partners are required to follow the mandatory reporting requirements required under state law for reporting suspected child abuse/neglect.
Training, Oversight, and Communication	Violation of any part of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Additionally, alleged criminal acts will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
Compliance with Laws, Confidentiality Requirements	The Superintendent will ensure that all PPSD personnel and all PPSD contractors comply fully with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and with all Board Policies. In the event any part of any Policy is unlawful, the Superintendent will report such event to the Board as soon as practicable and request of the Board a modification of this Policy.
Cross Reference	PPSD Policy, “Students and Staff Bullying and Harassment” PPSD Policy, “Social Media for Employees” PPSD Regulation, “Mandatory Reporting” (to be issued) Rhode Island General Law § 40-11-3, “Abused and Neglected Children-Duty to Report.” Rhode Island General Law § 40-11-3.3, “Duty to report – Sexual abuse of a child in an educational program.”
History	Policy Committee Review: June 19, 2017 Approved by Board: August 2, 2017