ECR
5440 Valley Circle Blvd.
Woodland Hills CA 91367

Professional Boundaries: Staff/Student Interaction Policy

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and Governing Board ("Board") members (collectively referred to as "adults" herein).

ECRCHS 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 is available on ECRCHS's website.

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 individual's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the individual, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to property.

For clarification purposes, the following examples are offered for direction and guidance of School employees, volunteers, contractors, and Board members:

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 a student on 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 (i.e., 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.

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Acceptable and Unacceptable Adult/Student Behavior

This policy is intended to guide adults in conducting themselves in a way that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of them and to specify the boundaries between such adults and students.

Although this policy gives specific, clear direction, it is each adult's obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents/guardians, students, colleagues, or School leaders. One viable standard that can be quickly applied, when you are unsure if certain conduct is acceptable, is to ask yourself, "Would I be engaged in this conduct if my family or colleagues were standing next to me?"

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 public 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.

Some activities may seem innocent from a an adult's perspective but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parent 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 responsibility 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 disciplinary purposes.

Thus, it is crucial that all adults learn this policy thoroughly and apply the lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors to their daily activities. Although sincere, competent interaction with students certainly fosters learning, student/adult interactions must have boundaries surrounding potential activities, locations, and intentions.

Duty to Report Suspected Misconduct

When any adult reasonably suspects or believes that another individual may have crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, the employee must immediately report the matter to a School administrator. 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. Adults 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.

Examples of Specific Behaviors
The following examples are not an exhaustive list:

Unacceptable Adult/Student Behaviors (Violations of this Policy)

(a) Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal and intimate nature.
(b) Kissing of any kind.
(c) Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation.
(d) Intentionally being alone with a student away from the School.
(e) Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments.
(f) Sexual jokes.
(g) Seeking emotional involvement with a student for your benefit.
(h) Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented.
(i) Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student.
(j) Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.
(k) Communication with students via an employee's personal accounts such as email, text message, and/or social media
(l) Engaging in any electronic, digital, or social media communication with a student that is not School-related.
(m) Any form of grooming behavior, including conduct designed to build secrecy or inappropriate trust.

Unacceptable Adult/Student Behaviors without Parent and Supervisor Permission
(These behaviors should only be exercised when adults have parent/guardian and supervisor permission.)

(a) Giving students a ride to/from School or School activities.
(b) Being alone in a room with a student at School with the door closed.
(c) Allowing students in your home.

Cautionary Staff/Student Behaviors

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

(a) Remarks about the physical attributes or development of anyone.
(b) Excessive attention toward a particular student.
(c) Sending emails, text messages or letters to students if the content is not about School activities.

Acceptable and Recommended Adult/Student Behaviors

(a) Getting parents' written consent for any after-School activity.
(b) Obtaining formal approval to take students off School property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
(c) Emails, text, phone and instant messages to students within School provided platforms must be professional and pertain to School activities or classes (Communication should be limited to School technology).
(d) Keeping the door open when alone with a student.
(e) Keeping reasonable space between you and your students.
(f) Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries.
(g) Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student.
(h) Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief.
(i) Asking for advice from fellow staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries.
(j) Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with the student.
(k) Informing the Executive Director about situations that have the potential to become more severe.
(l) Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later.
(m) Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students or coworkers.
(n) Asking another adult to be present if you will be alone with any student with special needs student.
(o) Asking another adult to be present when you must be alone with a student after regular School hours.
(p) Giving students praise and recognition without touching them.
(q) Pats on the back, high fives and handshakes are acceptable.

(r) Keeping your professional conduct, a high priority.
(s) Asking yourself if your actions are worth your job and career.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Professional Boundaries Policy

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date:_____