P4049 FRATERNIZATION AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Wichita Public Schools is committed to equal employment opportunities and to maintaining a workplace and educational environment that is free of coercion, sexual harassment, abuse of authority or power, favoritism, exploitation, relational impropriety, conflicts of interest, and other improper conduct. Employees shall maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students and with one another. Intimate relationships that involve supervisory authority or influence, and intimate or otherwise inappropriate relationships between staff and students, undermine these commitments and are subject to this policy.

Any violation of this policy by an employee of Wichita Public Schools shall result in disciplinary consequences, up to and including termination. Where appropriate, violations of this policy shall be reported to law enforcement and/or the Kansas State Department of Education.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLEMENTAL PROCEDURES

1. Scope and Relationship to Other Policies.

(A) This policy applies to all conduct, at all times, regardless of location or medium of communication. Conduct may violate this policy regardless of whether it also violates another policy or constitutes criminal conduct. This policy does not displace or supersede any other applicable policy addressing the same subject matter. If another, specific policy (e.g., Title IX) prescribes a complaint or investigation procedure, that procedure shall control the processing of the allegation. This policy shall not be construed to alter or override provisions of any collective bargaining agreement or administrator employee contract.

2. Intimate Relationships Between Employees.

(A) An employee shall not exercise direct or indirect supervisory authority, evaluative authority, disciplinary authority, or material influence over the hiring, assignment, compensation, advancement, evaluation, discipline, or working conditions of another employee with whom the employee has an Intimate Relationship. As used herein, “Intimate Relationship” means any relationship or interaction that reasonably may be described as sexual, romantic, amorous, dating, or non-platonic. Physical contact is not required, and an Intimate Relationship may be established by a single interaction or a pattern of conduct.

(B) Any employee who is in or enters an Intimate Relationship that creates or reasonably may create such authority, influence, favoritism, or a conflict of interest shall promptly disclose the relationship to the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee.

(C) When an Intimate Relationship is disclosed or otherwise determined to exist, Human Resources shall take reasonable measures to eliminate supervisory authority, undue influence,

favoritism, and conflicts of interest. P4011 may be applied when appropriate; this policy does not alter P4011's definition of Family Member.

3. Intimate Relationships Between Staff and Students.

(A) Staff shall not solicit, encourage, initiate, pursue, maintain, or engage in an Intimate Relationship with any current District student. This proscription is unconditional and without exception, regardless of the student's consent or the consent of the student's guardian(s).

(B) Staff shall not cultivate or defer an Intimate Relationship until after a student leaves the District. A relationship with a former student is prohibited if the relationship was initiated, encouraged, cultivated, or maintained while the individual was a student, or if it exploits a position of trust, authority, or influence arising from the staff member's District role.

(C) An employee who is uncertain whether circumstances involving a former student create a professional-boundary concern shall consult Human Resources before pursuing the relationship.

4. Professional Boundaries With Students.

(A) Staff shall maintain clear, reasonable, and professional boundaries with students and their families at all times.

(B) All interactions between staff and students must be connected to legitimate District objectives within the scope of the staff member's role at the District; be appropriate to the student's age and circumstances; and must not create the appearance of impropriety.

(C) Behavior that violates professional boundaries includes: (a) sexual, romantic, amorous, dating, or intimate conduct or communications; (b) secretive, personal, peer-like, or emotionally dependent relationships; (c) favoritism, repeated special privileges, or gifts unrelated to a legitimate school purpose; (d) unnecessary one-on-one encounters, off-campus meetings, or private transportation; (e) sharing or requesting intimate or personal information; (f) physical contact that is sexual, intimate, coercive, excessive, or otherwise inappropriate; (g) communications that are personal, sexual, harassing, demeaning, or unrelated to legitimate District purposes; (h) asking a student to conceal an interaction or communication; (i) using a student as the staff member's confidant; or (j) failing to notify administration when the staff member knows or reasonably should know that a student may be developing romantic, intimate, or otherwise inappropriate feelings toward the staff member.

(D) The existence of an otherwise appropriate educational, family, community, or preexisting relationship does not excuse conduct that otherwise violates this policy. When dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, the staff member is responsible for maintaining clear professional boundaries and consulting administration when necessary.

5. Electronic Communications and Social Media.

(A) Staff communications with students must comply with P1230, P1233, the District's Guidelines for Maintaining Professional Boundaries, and all other applicable policies and other requirements.

(B) No District employee shall privately or directly communicate with a student through a Social Media Platform except as expressly permitted by P1233. Employees are strongly discouraged from "friending," following, or otherwise connecting with students through personal social-media accounts.

(C) Electronic communication with students through a District-approved platform must be limited to legitimate educational, extracurricular, student-support, safety, or other assigned District purposes. Staff shall not move a student communication from an approved and monitorable platform to a personal, secret, transitory, or unauthorized channel. For the protection of staff and students, student communication must occur, whenever possible, through approved District channels and platforms

6. Reporting Duties.

(A) Any employee who observes, receives a report of, or reasonably suspects conduct that may violate this policy shall promptly report the concern to a building principal or other administrator and to Human Resources or the Title IX Coordinator, as appropriate. If the person accused is the ordinary recipient of the report, the report shall be made to that person's supervisor, Human Resources, the Title IX Coordinator, or the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent shall be directed to the Board of Education President or another Board member.

(B) An employee who suspects child abuse or neglect shall independently and immediately make the report required by P5117 and Kansas law. Reporting to a supervisor, administrator, Human Resources, or the Title IX Coordinator does not replace or delay that duty. If there is an immediate threat to safety, the employee shall contact emergency services and District Safety Services as appropriate.

(C) Employees shall not promise confidentiality, conduct an independent investigation, confront the person accused, or take action that may compromise student safety, evidence, or an official investigation. Employees may ask only the minimal questions reasonably necessary to identify the nature of the concern and make the required report.

7. Response, Investigation, and Interim Measures.

(A) The District shall respond promptly and route each report to the administrator or office responsible under applicable policy. Reports that may constitute Title IX sexual harassment shall be referred to the Title IX Coordinator and processed under P1117. Conduct that does not satisfy the definition of Title IX sexual harassment may still violate this policy or another District policy and may be investigated and addressed accordingly.

(B) The District may impose reasonable non-disciplinary interim measures to protect students, employees, the integrity of an investigation, and the educational or work environment. Such measures may include changes in supervision, schedule, duties, location, communication, access, or reporting relationships. Interim measures are not a determination of responsibility or discipline.

8. Non-Retaliation and Cooperation.

(A) The District prohibits retaliation, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, coercion, interference, or other adverse action against a person who in good faith makes a report, assists another person in making a report, participates in an investigation or proceeding, or attempts to prevent conduct prohibited by this policy.

(B) Employees shall cooperate truthfully with District investigations and preserve relevant records and communications. A report is not made in bad faith merely because it is unsubstantiated. Knowingly making a false report or knowingly providing materially false information may result in discipline.

9. Questions.

Employees with questions concerning this policy, a potential conflict, or appropriate professional boundaries shall contact their immediate supervisor, Human Resources, or the Title IX Coordinator. Seeking advice does not excuse a failure to make a time-sensitive report required by P5117 or another policy.

Administrative Responsibility: Human Resources

New Policy: November 2026