



## **4153.1: PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES AND STAFF RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS**

All employees are expected to comply with the Professional Code of Conduct, and to observe and maintain professional boundaries between themselves and students. A violation of such professional boundaries will be regarded as a form of misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

All personal electronic communication with students by District staff will only occur through the District e-mail system or District approved personal communication systems.

The following non-exclusive list of actions will be regarded as a violation of the professional boundaries and staff relationships with students that employees are expected to maintain with a student includes, but is not limited to:

- Text-messaging students, unless the student is a child or family friend of the employee.
- Any communication with students in an inappropriate, immoral or unethical manner.
- Engaging in private social-networking communication with a student on a social networking site, unless the student is a child of the employee or family friend. Material that employees post on social networks that is publicly available to those in the school community should reflect the professional image applicable to the employee's position and not impair the employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents or impair the employee's ability to serve as a role model for students.
- Engaging in sexual activity, a romantic relationship, or dating a student or a former student within one year of the student's graduation date or within one year from the date the student ceases enrollment in the District.
- Making any sexual advances – verbal, written, or physical – towards a student, which shall include any behavior or gesture that could be reasonably construed as an attempt to gain sexual or romantic favors or gratification.
- Showing sexually inappropriate materials or objects to a student.
- Discussing with a student sexual topics that are not related to a specific curriculum.
- Telling sexual or inappropriate jokes to a student.
- Invading a student's physical privacy (e.g., walking in on the student in a restroom), except as appropriate in relation to the child's needs.
- Being overly "touchy" with a specific student.

- Addressing students or permitting students to address staff members with personalized terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner.
- Allowing a specific student to get away with misconduct that is not tolerated from other students, except as appropriate for students with an IEP or 504 plan.
- Discussing with the student the employee's problems that would normally be discussed with adults (e.g., marital problems).
- Giving a student a ride in the employee's personal vehicle without express permission of the student's parent/guardian and school administrator unless another adult is in the vehicle and except in circumstances that are reasonably appropriate, such as driving a babysitter home or driving the friend or teammate of the employee's child home. If there is any question as to whether it is appropriate or not, the employee should notify the employee's direct supervisor for direction.
- Taking a student on an outing without obtaining prior express permission of the student's parent and school administrator.
- Inviting a student to the employee's home without prior express permission of the student's parent and school administrator.
- Going to the student's home when the student's parent or a proper chaperone is not present.
- Giving gifts of a personal nature to a specific student.
- Any other behavior or conduct that can be reasonably construed as grooming of a student, as the term grooming is defined in any applicable State law, regulation and/or in this Rule and Policy 4153.

## **Reporting Violations**

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

Staff members are required to promptly notify the principal (or other administrator) or the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this Rule.

If a student contacts a staff member and the student does not use the District e-mail system or designated personal communication system, the staff member must notify their immediate supervisor of the communication within 24 hours, unless circumstances warrant an immediate contact. The staff member is also responsible to ensure student is aware of and utilizes District approved communication systems in future communications.

Any violation of this Policy and Rule may result in any or all of the following:

- Disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment;
- Referral to the State Department of Education which may result in the suspension or revocation of an employee's certification; and/or
- Referral to the Department of Health and Human Services or law enforcement if such violation involves conduct or allegations of sexual or other abuse.

**Date of Adoption**

**July 9, 2018**

**Date of Revision**

**November 2, 2020**

**Related Policies and Rules**

**[4153: Professional Boundaries and Staff Relationships with Students](#)**

**[4155.1: Code of Ethics](#)**

**[5620: Child Abuse, Neglect and Cruelty](#)**

**[5620.1: Child Abuse, Neglect and Cruelty](#)**

**[7305: Web and Social Media Publishing](#)**

**[7305.1: District Internet Web Pages and Social Media Sites](#)**