

## STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

NEPN/NSBA Code: GF

The RSU #78 Board expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators and others, to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their conduct with students. For the purpose of this policy, staff members also include school volunteers.

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust; an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in an educational setting; and 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 a particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

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

1. 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 Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students;
2. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship;
3. Sexual banter, allusions, jokes or innuendos with students;
4. Asking a student to keep a secret;
5. Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students;
6. Addressing students with terms of endearment, pet names or otherwise in an overly familiar manner; and
7. Permitting students to address you by your first name, nickname or otherwise in an overly familiar manner.

If a student initiates a discussion of a personal matter to a staff member, staff members are expected to be supportive within the scope of their training and refer the student to appropriate guidance, counseling or administration when deemed appropriate to do so.

Before engaging in the following activities, staff members will review the activity with their building Principal or supervisor, as appropriate:

1. Being alone with individual students out of public view;
2. Inviting or allowing a student to visit the staff member's home without other adults or students present;
3. Visiting a student's home without other adults present, unless on official school business;

4. Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by telephone, e-mail, Instant Messenger or Internet chat rooms, or letters (beyond homework or other legitimate school business);
5. Exchanging personal gifts (beyond the customary student-teacher gifts); and/or
6. 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 except as participants in organized community activities;
7. Associating with students in any situation or activity that includes the presence of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco or any situation that could be considered sexually suggestive.

Reporting Violations Students and/or their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the Principal (or other appropriate 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 the appropriate building administrator or Superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Disciplinary Action: Staff violations of this policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Human Services and/or law enforcement in accordance with the Board's policy on Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.

This policy shall be included in all employee, student and volunteer handbooks.

Cross Reference:     ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students.  
                           JLF – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.

Adopted: March 28, 2006  
Revised: January 2, 2014  
Reviewed: December 6, 2017  
Revised: March 12, 2020  
Reviewed: 7.31.2023