## Employee-Student Relations

**Boundaries Defined**

For the purposes of this policy, the term "Boundaries" is defined as acceptable professional behavior by staff members while interacting with a student.

**Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior**

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member's perspective, but some of these can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parental point of view. The purpose of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct.

Staff members must understand their own responsibilities 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 any required disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is critical that all employees study this policy thoroughly and apply its spirit and intent in their daily activities. Although sincere, professional interaction with students fosters the charter mission of "Academic Excellence," student/staff interaction has Boundaries regarding the activities, locations and intentions.

**Unacceptable Behaviors**

(These lists, and any subsequent lists, are not meant to be all-inclusive, but, rather illustrative of the types of behavior addressed by this policy.)

* Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal and intimate nature
* Kissing of ANY kind
* Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation
* Intentionally being alone with a student away from the school
* Making, or participating in, sexually inappropriate comments
* Sexual jokes, or jokes/comments with sexual double-entendre
* Seeking emotional involvement (which can include intimate attachment) with a student beyond the normative care and concern required of an educator
* Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented
* Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student in an attempt to gain their support and understanding
* Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior
* Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities without parent permission
* Being alone in a room with a student at school and with the door closed
* Allowing students in your home without signed parent permission for a pre-planned and pre- communicated educational activity which must include another educator, parent, or other responsible adult
* Remarks about the physical attributes or physiological development of anyone
* Excessive attention toward a particular student
* Sending e-mails, text messages, social media messages, or letters to students if the content is not about school activities and not in accordance with applicable school policies
* Being “friends” with a student on any social media website
* Using profanity with or to a student
* Using any form tobacco, alcohol, drugs or smoking paraphernalia while in the presence of or observed by students (in person or by video app, including but not limited to messaging apps, Zoom, Googlemeets, Microsoft Teams, etc).
* Involving students in non-educational or non-school related issues, including, but not limited to, the employee’s employment issues

**Acceptable and Recommended Behaviors**

* Obtaining parents' written consent for any after-school activity on or off campus (exclusive of tutorials)
* Obtaining formal approval (site and parental) to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions
* E-mails, text-messages, phone conversations, and other communications to and with students must be professional and pertain to school activities or classes (communication should be initiated via school-based technology and equipment).
* Keeping the door open when alone with a student
* Keeping reasonable space between you and students
* Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries
* Keeping parents and your Supervisor or Assistant Principal or Principal informed when a significant issue develops about a student
* Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief
* Asking for advice from senior staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to Boundaries
* Involving your supervisor, the Assistant Principal or the Principal if conflict arises with a student
* Informing your supervisor, the Assistant Principal or the Principal about situations that have the potential to become more severe
* Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later
* Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students and/or co-workers
* Asking another staff member to be present if you will be alone with any student who may have severe social or emotional challenges (and you are not the assigned case educator)
* Asking another staff member to be present, or within close supervisory distance, when you must be alone with a student after regular school hours
* Giving students praise and recognition without touching them in questionable areas
* Giving professional pats on the back, high-five's, and handshakes are appropriate
* Keeping your professional conduct a high priority during all moments of student contact
* Asking yourself if any of your actions which go contrary to these provisions are worth sacrificing your job and career

**Reporting Violations of Employee-Student Relations Policy**

When any staff member, parent, or student becomes aware of a staff member having crossed the Boundaries specified in this policy, he or she must report the suspicion to the Principal promptly. All reports shall be confidential. Prompt reporting is essential to protect students, the suspected staff member, any witnesses, and the school as a whole. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness of, or concern about, student behavior that crosses Boundaries, or any situation in which a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse.

**Investigating Allegations of Violations of the Employee-Student Relations Policy**

The Principal will promptly investigate and document the investigation of any allegation of a violation of the Employee-Student Relations Policy, using such support staff or outside assistance as he or she deems necessary and appropriate under the circumstances unless the allegation also constitutes a reportable allegation under California Penal Code section 11166. In the event the allegation also constitutes a reportable allegation under Penal Code section 11166, the Principal shall comply with the legal requirements of immediately reporting the allegation to a child protective agency and shall follow up such report with a written report with thirty-six (36) hours.

If the allegation is only a violation of the Employee-Student Relations Policy, but not a violation of California Penal Code section 11166, the Principal shall conduct an investigation as set forth above. Throughout this fact- finding process, the Principal, and all others privy to the investigation, shall protect the privacy interests of any affected student(s) and/or staff member(s), including any potential witnesses, as much as possible. The Principal shall promptly notify the Governing Board of the existence and status of any investigations. Upon completion of any such investigations, the Principal shall report to the Governing Board any conclusions reached. The Principal shall consult with [SCHOOL] legal counsel, as appropriate, prior to, during, and after conducting any investigation.

**Consequences of Violating the Employee-Student Relations Policy**

Staff members who have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, and, where appropriate, will be reported to authorities for potential legal action. In such instances, [SCHOOL] will collaborate with a contracted liaison agency, as well as with school counsel, as necessary.