

## **Staff/Student Relations**

### General

The Board expects staff members to maintain courteous and professional relationships with students. All staff members are responsible for maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning through consistently and fairly applied discipline and the maintenance of physical and emotional boundaries with students. These boundaries must be maintained regardless of the student's age, the location of the activity, whether the student allegedly consents to the relationship or whether the staff member directly supervises the student and include all interactions with students outside of school hours even when the employee is not acting in the role of an SSD employee (e.g. respite care, tutoring, baby-sitting). These boundaries also apply to the relationships between staff members and students, and to staff members who inappropriately interact with any student regardless of the student's age. Maintaining these boundaries is an essential requirement for employment in the District. Examples of failure to maintain these boundaries are contained in Regulation GHB-R.

### Absolute Prohibitions

Certain interactions between staff members and students ~~that~~ are never acceptable and are absolutely prohibited. These are listed in Regulation GHB-R.

### Special Considerations

The goal of this policy is to protect students from harm and staff members from allegations of misconduct by requiring staff members to maintain professional boundaries with students. The District does not intend to interfere with or impede appropriate interactions between staff members and students. Regulation GHB-R lists special considerations in abiding by the requirements of this policy.

In citing a special consideration, the staff member must be prepared to articulate the reason for any deviation from the requirements of this policy and must demonstrate that he or she has maintained an appropriate relationship with the student. To avoid confusion, the District encourages staff members to consult with their supervisors prior to engaging in behaviors or activities that might potentially violate professional boundaries as defined in this policy.

### Electronic Communication

Staff members are encouraged to communicate with students and parents/guardians for educational purposes using a variety of effective methods, including electronic communication. Staff members must maintain professional boundaries with students while using electronic communication and will use only methods as provided by or approved by the District. Requirements for electronic communication are described in Regulation GHB-R.

## Consequences

Staff members who violate this policy or withhold knowledge of violation of this policy will be disciplined, up to and including termination of employment. Depending on the circumstances, the District may report staff members to law enforcement and the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services or Division of Aging for students over 18, for further investigation, and the District may seek revocation of a staff member's license(s) with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

## Reporting

Any person, including a student, who has concerns about or is uncomfortable with a relationship or activities between a staff member and a student should bring this concern immediately to the attention of the principal, area coordinator, other staff member, or staff member's supervisor. Any staff member suspecting physical or emotional abuse or sexual misconduct will contact the Child Abuse Hotline immediately as instructed in Policy JHG and Regulation JHG-R.

Any staff member who possesses knowledge or evidence of possible violations of this policy must immediately make a report to the District's administration. Staff members must also immediately report a violation or perceived violation of the District's discrimination and harassment policy (Policy AC) to the District's nondiscrimination compliance officer. Staff members may be disciplined for failing to make such reports.

The District will not discipline, terminate or otherwise discriminate or retaliate against a staff member for reporting in good faith any action by another employee that may be a violation of this policy.

## Training

The District will provide training to District staff that includes current and reliable information on maintaining physical and emotional boundaries, identifying signs of neglect, physical, and/or sexual abuse in children and potentially abusive relationships between children and adults. The training will emphasize legal reporting requirements and cover how to establish an atmosphere where students feel comfortable discussing matters related to abuse. In addition, the District will ensure that students at all ages have instruction included in their curriculum about appropriate staff /student relations.

Adopted: May 11, 2010

Revised: January 9, 2018  
February 28, 2012

Cross Refs: AC, Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation  
EHB, Technology Usage  
JG, Student Discipline  
JHG, Reporting and Investigating Child Abuse/Neglect  
KB, Public Information Program

Legal Refs: §§ 162.069, 168.114, 210.115, RSMo.  
*Ross v. Robb*, 662 S.W.2d 257 (1983)  
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681  
*Davis v. Monroe County Bd. of Educ.* 526 U.S. 629 (1999)  
*Gebser v. Lago Vista Ind. Sch. Dist.*, 524 U.S. 274 (1998)  
<http://revisor.mo.gov/main/Home.aspx>  
<http://uscode.house.gov/>  
[https://www.google.com/?gws\\_rd=ssl#q=U.S.+Const.+amend.+XIV&lrfid=0](https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=U.S.+Const.+amend.+XIV&lrfid=0)