



Mukilteo School District

Personnel - Series 5000

Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries - 5026

The Mukilteo School District expects all staff to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their interaction with students. Staff are required to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, through consistently and fairly applied discipline and established and maintained professional boundaries.

The interactions and relationships between staff and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust, an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in and outside of the educational setting, and consistency with the educational mission of the schools.

Staff will not intrude on a student's physical and emotional boundaries unless the intrusion is necessary to serve an educational or physical, mental and/or emotional health purpose. An educational purpose is one that relates to the employee's duties in the District. Staff are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their own conduct and of other staff when interacting with students. Staff will discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they suspect or are unsure whether conduct is appropriate or constitutes a violation of this policy.

The District supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, staff are prohibited from inappropriate online socializing or from engaging in any conduct on social networking Web sites that violates the law, District policies or other generally recognized professional standards. Staff whose conduct violates this policy may face discipline and/or termination, consistent with the District's policies, acceptable use agreement and collective bargaining agreements, as applicable.

The Superintendent or designee will develop procedures and training to accompany this policy.

Legal References:

RCW 26A.400 Crimes against children.

RCW 26A.405.470 Crimes against children - Mandatory termination of certificated employees - Appeal - Recovery of salary or compensation by district.

RCW 26A.405.475 Termination of certificated employee based on guilty plea or conviction of certain felonies - Notice to superintendent of public instruction - Records of notices.

RCW 26A.410.090 Revocation or suspension of certificate or permit to teach - Criminal basis - Complaints - Investigation - Process.

RCW 26A.410.095 Violation or noncompliance - Investigatory powers of superintendent of public instruction-Requirements for investigation of alleged sexual misconduct towards a child - Court order - Contempt - Written findings required.

RCW 26A.410.100 Revocation of authority to teach - Hearings.

WAC 181-87 Professional Certification - Acts of Unprofessional Conduct

WAC 181-88 Sexual Misconduct, Verbal Abuse and Physical Abuse - Mandatory Disclosure - Prohibited Agreements

Adoption Date: May 24, 2010



Mukilteo School District

Personnel - Series 5000

Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries - Procedures - 5026-P

District employees shall maintain professional relationships and appropriate boundaries with students that are consistent with the legal and ethical duty of care that school personnel have for students.

An inappropriate boundary invasion means an act, omission, or pattern of such behavior by a school employee that does not have an educational purpose; and results in abuse of the staff/student professional relationship.

Unacceptable Conduct

Examples of inappropriate boundary invasions by employees include but are not limited to the following:

- Any type of inappropriate physical contact with a student or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the Board's policy on Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students;
- Showing pornography to a student;
- Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the professional staff-student relationship;
- Socializing where students are consuming alcohol, drugs or tobacco;
- For non-guidance/counseling staff, encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff. In either case, staff involvement should be limited to a direct connection to the student's school performance;
- Sending students on personal errands unrelated to any educational purpose;
- Banter, allusions, jokes or innuendos of a sexual nature with students;
- Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students;
- Addressing students, or permitting students to address staff members with personalized terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;
- Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by phone, electronic means or letters (beyond homework or other legitimate school business) without including the parent/guardian;
- Exchanging personal gifts, cards or letters with an individual student;
- Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for beverages, meals or movies, shopping, traveling and recreational activities) outside of school-sponsored events, except as participants in organized community activities;
- Giving a student a ride alone in a vehicle in a non-emergency situation; and/or
- Unnecessarily invading a student's privacy (e.g., walking in on the student in the bathroom)

Appearances of Impropriety

The following activities are boundary invasions and can create an actual impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Whenever possible, employees should avoid these situations.

- Being alone with an individual student out of the view of others;
- Inviting or allowing individual students to visit the staff member's home;
- Visiting a student's home; and/or
- Social networking with students for non-educational purposes.

Reporting Violations

Students and their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the principal (or other administrator) if they believe an employee may be engaging in conduct that violates this policy.

Employees are required to promptly notify the principal (or other administrator) or the superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. If required, the violation will be reported to the state Office of Professional Practices. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement in accordance with the Board's policy on Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.

Training

All new employees and volunteers will receive training on appropriate staff/student boundaries within three months of employment. Continuing employees will receive training every three years.

May 28, 2010

Revised: June 23, 2010