

STAFF AND STUDENT NON-FRATERNIZATION POLICY

DEFINITIONS

- (a) Staff: For purposes of this policy, *Staff* is defined as the following:
1. Any individual employed by the District, including any certificated or classified employee, student, teacher, practicum student, fieldwork student, temporary employee, and substitute employee;
 2. Employees of contractors or agencies and independent contractors; and
 3. Volunteers, including Board Members.
- (b) Student: *Student* is defined as any individual enrolled in the District's educational programs.

The District expects all staff members, as defined above, to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their conduct with students. The relationships between staff and students must be conducive to an effective and safe learning environment. Staff are role models for students, whether on or off school property and both during and outside of school hours.

All District staff members are expected to accept responsibility for their conduct, and to understand that their conduct may have legal consequences to the District and that even off-duty conduct may adversely affect the abilities of a staff member to effectively perform his/her job duties. Staff is expected to abide by a professional standard of conduct and model good citizenship for students, parents and the community.

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. Even if a student participates willingly in an activity, prohibited interactions between staff and students (regardless of the student's age) are a violation of this policy.

Specifically, the District expects that its staff maintain appropriate professional relationships with students and be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with their site administrator or supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

Employees must understand that even an appearance of inappropriate relationships will adversely impact their effectiveness in the school environment. Therefore, employees must be diligent in maintaining the highest ethical standards when interacting with students both inside and outside the school environment and are strictly prohibited from forming social and/or personal relationships with students outside the classroom.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Staff members are prohibited from engaging in any of the following conduct, regardless of whether the conduct occurs on or off school property or whether the conduct occurs during or outside of school hours. The following list of prohibited conduct does not, and is not intended to, constitute the entire list of conduct for which discipline may be imposed:

- (a) Engaging in any romantic or sexual relationships with students, including dating, flirting, sexual contact, inappropriate physical displays of affection, or sexually suggestive comments between staff and students;
- (b) Fostering, encouraging, or participating in emotionally or socially intimate relationships with students through communication or gift-giving;
- (c) Initiating or continuing communications with students for reasons unrelated to any direct educational purpose, including oral or written communication; telephone calls; electronic communication such as texting, instant messaging, email, chat rooms, Facebook, or other social networking sites; webcams; or photographs;
- (d) Socializing with students outside of instructional time;
- (e) Providing alcohol or drugs (regardless of age) to students – either prescription or illegal (except for those provided in accordance with district policy on medication administration); and
- (f) Transporting students unless part of the staff member's job description.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

- (a) **Duty to Report.** Any person with knowledge or suspicion of an improper relationship between staff and a student must immediately report the conduct to school administration. Nothing in this paragraph is intended to relieve mandated reporters of their obligations under state and local statutes. All reports shall be forwarded to *[insert name of designated compliance officer]* for further investigation.
- (b) **Anonymous Complaints.** Anonymous complaints of inappropriate fraternization by staff with students will also be investigated.
- (c) **Investigations.** Allegations of inappropriate staff-student relations shall be investigated immediately with the procedure utilized for complaints of harassment within the District. Allegations of inappropriate staff-student behavior shall be promptly investigated and will be treated as confidential and private to the extent possible within legal constraints.
- (d) **Protection from Retaliation.** Staff, students, and witnesses who make a good-faith report of a suspected fraternization violation, or who cooperate in inquiries or investigations related to the investigation of such a report, shall be protected from retaliation in accordance with District Policy

TRAINING

The principal of each school site and/or department or program supervisor shall be responsible for informing students, staff, and volunteers of the requirements of this policy, including the duty to report and the procedures established for investigation and resolution of complaints. Students shall be provided such information in an age appropriate manner. This policy will be disseminated as appropriate to staff, students, and parents.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

The District will take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any staff found to have violated this non-fraternization policy in accordance with District policy, regulation and any applicable collective bargaining agreement. A violation of this policy may also subject staff to criminal and/or civil sanctions as well as disciplinary action by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.