



GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION Personal and Professional Boundaries 429

Rationale

Employees are always in a professional relationship with their students characterized by boundaries that must not be violated or compromised. In their professional role they do not behave as a friend or parent.

Policy

School personnel must treat their students with courtesy and dignity and maintain objectivity in their relationships.

Procedure and Guidelines

The following are examples of boundary violations that must be avoided:

1. Meeting with an individual student behind closed doors or without the opportunity for observation by other adults.
2. Using sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students.
3. Touching a student without valid reason, i.e.
 - a. Kissing a student or allowing him or her to kiss you.
 - b. Lengthy hugs or forceful frontal hugs.
 - c. Cuddling or tickling.
 - d. Piggy-back rides.
 - e. Lap-sitting.
 - f. Stroking a student's hair.
4. Holding conversations of a personal nature or having contact with students via written or electronic means without a valid context (outside of a professional/educational context)
5. Texting or online communication with students on the adult's personal email, or being "friends" on a social networking site.
6. Sharing or soliciting personal information without a valid reason.
7. Asking students to keep secrets.
8. Attending parties or socializing with students without permission of school and/or parents.
9. Inviting a student or students to their home, without appropriate supervision and parental consent.
10. Drinking or being under the influence of alcohol while supervising students/offering alcohol to students.
11. Driving an individual student (except in an emergency).

The following are examples of actions considered appropriate and respectful of personal and professional boundaries:

1. Communicating class assignments on school e-mail.
2. Limiting physical contact appropriately, i.e.
 - a. Restraining a student from physically harming self or others.
 - b. Affirming a student with a pat on the hand, shoulder, or back.

- c. Placing a hand gently on a student’s hand or forearm.
- d. Shaking a participant’s hand in greeting.
- e. Short hugs.
- f. High fives.
- 3. Obtaining student medical information to be taken on a school trip.
- 4. Sharing information (with family consent) about a family death for the purpose of supporting that student.
- 5. Protecting confidentiality and personal privacy / discouraging gossip.
- 6. Attending a school sponsored graduation event.
- 7. Accepting an invitation to a family dinner or an out of school activity such as a concert, recital, sporting event.

The following are examples of protective strategies that reduce the potential for real or perceived boundary violations:

- 1. Having more than one employee/adult present whenever possible.
- 2. Meeting with multiple students wherever possible.
- 3. Discouraging/correcting inappropriate conversations between/among students.
- 4. Wearing appropriate and modest attire at all times when working with students, and ensuring that students do like-wise.

All real or perceived violations of personal and professional boundaries must be addressed and/or disclosed. Depending on the nature of the violation, this action may consist of:

- 1. Reminding a student or colleague about the real or perceived inappropriateness of their actions.
- 2. Reporting the violation to the principal, education committee, or Superintendent’s Office.
- 3. Reporting suspected child abuse to the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development. (See CISVA Policy 405).
- 4. Reporting to police.

Further information regarding prevention, disclosure and reporting is available in the related CISVA policies cross-referenced below:

Reference: Responding to Child Welfare Concerns BC Ministry of Children and Families Cross-reference: Policy 302 Complaints Policy 405 Student Abuse / Neglect Policy 409 Field-Trips/Off-Site Experiences Policy 417 Risk Management Policv 425 Volunteers	Approved: Board of Directors
	Date Approved: October 5, 2010
	Date(s) Revised: