

STAFF-STUDENT RELATIONS

The relationship between the District's staff and students must be one of cooperation, understanding and mutual respect. Staff members have a responsibility to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning and to motivate each student to perform to his/her capacity.

Staff members should strive to secure individual and group discipline, and should be treated with respect by students at all times. By the same token, staff members should extend to students the same respect and courtesy that they, as staff members, have a right to demand.

Although it is desired that staff members have a sincere interest in students as individuals, partiality and the appearance of impropriety must be avoided. Excessive informal and/or social involvement with students is prohibited. Such conduct is not compatible with professional ethics and, as such, will not be tolerated.

Staff members are expected to use good judgment in their relationships with students both inside and outside of the school context including, but not limited to, the following guidelines.

1. Staff members shall not make derogatory comments to students regarding the school, its staff and/or other students.
2. The exchange of purchased gifts between staff members and students is discouraged.
3. Staff-sponsored parties at which students are in attendance, unless they are a part of the school's extracurricular program and are properly supervised, are prohibited.
4. Staff members shall not fraternize, written or verbally, with students except on matters that pertain to school-related issues.
5. Staff members shall not associate with students at any time in any situation or activity that could be considered sexually suggestive or involve the presence or use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.
6. **Soliciting, encouraging, engaging or consummating and inappropriate relationship with any student, minor or individual who was a student in the preceding 12 months** ~~Dating between staff members and students~~ is prohibited.
7. Staff members shall not use **disparaging remarks**, insults or sarcasm against students **under any circumstances** ~~as a method of forcing compliance with requirements or expectations~~.
8. Staff members shall maintain **appropriate professional, emotional and social boundaries in a reasonable standard of care** ~~for~~ the supervision, control and protection of students commensurate with their assigned duties and responsibilities.

9. Staff members shall not send students on personal errands.
10. Staff members shall, pursuant to law and Board policy, immediately report any suspected signs of child abuse or neglect.
11. Staff members shall not attempt to diagnose or treat a student's personal problem relating to sexual behavior, substance abuse, mental or physical health and/or family relationships but, instead, should refer the student to the appropriate individual or agency for assistance.
12. Staff members shall not **willingly or knowingly violate any student confidentiality required by Federal or State law.** ~~disclose information concerning a student, other than directory information, to any person not authorized to receive such information. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning assessments, ability scores, grades, behavior, mental or physical health and/or family background.~~
13. **Staff members shall not groom a student or minor for the purpose of establishing an inappropriate emotional, romantic or sexual relationship.**

(Permissive language)

Social Media

1. District staff are prohibited from posting data, documents, photographs or inappropriate information on any social media platform that might result in a disruption of classroom activity or that violates State or Federal law relating to staff and student privacy. The Superintendent/designee has full discretion in determining when a disruption of classroom activity has occurred.
2. District staff are prohibited from providing personal social media passwords to students.
3. Fraternalization between District staff and students via the internet, personal email accounts, text messaging, personal social media and other modes of virtual technology is also prohibited.
4. Access of personal social media during school hours is prohibited.

Violation of the prohibitions listed above ~~will~~ **may** result in staff and/or student discipline in accordance with State law, Board policies and regulations, the staff and student codes of conduct and handbooks and/or staff negotiated agreements. **Violations by staff also may be reported to the Ohio Department of Education for further investigation.** Nothing in this policy prohibits District staff and students from the use of educational websites and/or use of social media created for curricular, cocurricular or extracurricular purposes.

[Adoption date:]

LEGAL REF.: ORC 3313.20; **3319.31; 3319.311**
OAC Chapter 3301-73

CROSS REFS.: GBC, Staff Ethics
GBCA, Staff Conflict of Interest
GBCB, Staff Conduct
GBI, Staff Gifts and Solicitations
IIBH, District Websites
JFC, Student Conduct (Zero Tolerance)
JG, Student Discipline
JHF, Student Safety
JHG, Reporting Child Abuse and Mandatory Training
JL, Student Gifts and Solicitations
JO, Student Records
KBA, Public's Right to Know
Staff Handbooks
Student Handbooks

CONTRACT REFS.: Teachers' Negotiated Agreement
Support Staff Negotiated Agreement

NOTE: The success or failure of the instructional program is influenced heavily upon the relationship between staff and students. Boards are encouraged to use this policy as a tool in which to set the parameters for the relationship between staff and students. Specific provisions may be added, modified or removed.

*The popularity of social media is yet another concern for districts. **Social media** ~~These sites~~ adds another layer of responsibility and accountability to the relationship between staff and students. The language suggested in this section is permissive, meaning that boards may or may not choose to include this language in the policy, **but is strongly recommended.***

The Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators (Licensure Code) is adopted and updated by the State Board of Education (SBOE) due to legislative requirements. The Licensure Code serves as a basis for decisions on issues relating to licensure and provides a guide for conduct having professional implications. It covers teachers, principals, superintendents, educational aides, coaches, substitute teachers and other individuals credentialed by the SBOE. It is used in conjunction with applicable statutes and administrative rules.