

Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries

The purpose of this policy is to provide all staff, students, volunteers and community members with information to increase their awareness of their role in protecting children from inappropriate conduct by adults.

The Reardan-Edwall School District Board of Directors expects all staff members to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their interaction with students. Staff members 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 members 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 members 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 staff member's duties in the district. Additionally, staff members are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their own conduct and the conduct of other staff when interacting with students. Staff members will discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they suspect or are unsure whether conduct is inappropriate or constitutes a violation of this policy.

The Reardan-Edwall School District Board of Directors supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, district employees 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. Employees 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 staff protocols for reporting and investigating allegations and develop procedures and training to accompany this policy.

Additional Guidelines

1. Prevent One-on-One Access to Students:
 - a. Classroom doors should have windows; windows should not be covered except in lockdown situations.
 - b. When an educator meets in the classroom alone with a student, the door should be open.
 - c. Discourage educators from one-on-one contact with students in private settings.

- d. Require educators and students to meet in places observable by others, such as offices with windows or outdoors, if privacy is needed.
- e. When a counselor or administrator meets alone with a student, the door should have windows that are not covered.
- f. Assign at least two educators to monitor bathrooms and locker rooms of their gender, when possible.
- g. When dealing with a toileting incident, two adults should assist the student if possible.
- h. Assign at least two educators to be present to assist students with activities such as putting on bathing suits and taking showers.
- i. Encourage educators to include another adult in electronic communications with students.

2. Prohibit educators from:

- a. Taking a student without another adult to private areas, such as storage closets, athletic training rooms, hotel rooms, or personal vehicles.
- b. Sleeping in the same room overnight with students, unless the student's parent or guardian is present.
- c. Taking a student into the educator's home, unless the student's parent or guardian is present.

3. Require educators to:

- a. Inform a program supervisor before moving students out of the program area or to a different location on or off campus.
- b. Use separate bathrooms, locker rooms, and showers from student or, if separate facilities are not available, schedule separate usage times.
- c. Release students only to an authorized parent, legal guardian, or other adult specifically authorized by the custodial parent or guardian and only after confirming their identification.

Enforce Professional Boundaries with Supervision

1. Require that supervisors:

- a. Receive training on professional boundaries
- b. Make periodic unannounced visits in class and during activities to observe whether educators are following professional boundaries.

- c. Document specific observations about how educators interact with students.
- d. Correct and provide prompt feedback to educators regarding their adherence to professional boundaries.
- e. Stop any interaction with a student that appears suspicious.
- f. Discontinue any adult's participation in activities or programs involving students if someone suspects or alleges an inappropriate boundary invasion.
- g. Train all staff members, volunteers, and students, on how to report suspected professional boundary violations.
- h. Require that educators report suspected violations of professional boundaries.
- i. Encourage parents or legal guardians to report any suspected professional boundary violations.

Coaching Sports

In coaching any sport, be mindful of touching involved from coaches, and seek ways to mitigate.

Coaches should inform players that coaching generally involves physical touch for the purpose of teaching the sport, but anyone uncomfortable can ask not to be touched and the coach will strive to respect the student's wishes. Students should have the opportunity to tell the coach privately that they do not want coaching to include touch, and coaches should not publicly reveal such communication, but should share it with any assistant coaches.

If possible, assign two coaches or a second adult at practices.

Wrestling coaches should not demonstrate holds on student wrestlers unless there has been a meeting that school year with parents and the student and parent agree to a specific coach demonstrating with the student. Coaches should permit parents to attend wrestling practices.

Reporting

When an administrator receives a report that an employee, volunteer, or contractor has perpetrated sexual misconduct against a student or a suspicion of such, the administrator will follow the district's reporting protocol. Based on the circumstances, the administrator might need to inform:

1. The Title IX Coordinator
2. The district's legal counsel
3. The district's head of compliance
4. Campus police or the district's student protection officer

The administrator should consider whether state or local laws require informing the local police and /or state or local child protection authorities.

The administrator should take immediate steps to prevent further harm to the alleged victim or other students, such as removing the alleged abuser from the program or activity or limiting that individual's contact with students pending resolution of the matter.

Legal References:

RCW 28A.400 Crimes against children

RCW 28A.405.470 Crimes against children - Mandatory termination of certificated Employees - Appeal - Recovery of salary or compensation by district

RCW 28A.405.475 Termination of certificated employee based on guilty plea or conviction of certain felonies - Notice to superintendent of public instruction - Record of notices.

RCW 28A.410.090 Revocation or suspension of certificate or permit to teach - Criminal basis Complaints - Investigation – Process

RCW 28A.410.095 Violation or noncompliance - Investigatory powers of superintendent of public instruction - Requirements for investigation of alleged sexual misconduct towards a child - Court orders - Contempt - Written findings required

RCW 28A.410.100 Revocation of authority to teach - Hearings

WAC 181-87 Professional Certification - Acts of Unprofessional Conduct

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

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