

DOVER SCHOOL DISTRICT	POLICY CODE: GBEBB
DATE OF ADOPTION: MAY 8, 2017	PAGE 1 OF 2

STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

The Dover School Board expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators and others, to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their conduct with students. For the purposes of this policy, staff members also include school volunteers (including, but not limited to; coaches, volunteers, chaperones, and other individuals who have been entrusted with the care and safety of students).

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust; an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between staff and students in an educational setting; and consistent with the educational mission of the schools. The staff in our schools are the key to securing a safe, responsive school environment. Educators, as part of their Code of Ethics and their professional responsibilities, must not only respond effectively, quickly, and consistently to incidents of bullying students, they must model the types of interactions that are appropriate.

Prohibited Conduct

Examples of unacceptable conduct by staff members that are expressly prohibited include but are not limited to the following:

- Behavior that intentionally exposes a student to embarrassment, disparagement, intimidation or retaliation. Staff bullying violates the Code of Ethics of the Profession (NEA Code of Ethics; Statement 5, Principle 1);
- Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the Board's policy on Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students;
- Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship;
- 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 be supportive but 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.
- Sexual banter, allusions, jokes or innuendos with students;
- Asking a student to keep a secret;
- Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students;
- Addressing students with terms of endearment, pet names or otherwise in an overly familiar manner; and
- Permitting students to address you by your first name, nickname or otherwise in an overly familiar manner.

Before engaging in the following activities, staff members will review the activity with their building principal or supervisor, as appropriate:

- Being alone with individual students out of public view;
- Driving students home or to other locations;
- Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home;
- Visiting a student's home, unless on official school business;

- Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by telephone or text messaging, computer (such as e-mail, Instant Messenger, social networking sites), or letters (beyond homework or other legitimate school business);
- Exchanging personal gifts (beyond the customary student-teacher gifts); and/or
- Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for meals or movies, shopping, traveling, and recreational activities) outside of school-sponsored events except as participants in organized community activities.

Staff members are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they are unsure about whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

Student Safety

It is expected that any staff member who has a student in their charge will be responsible for that student from the time in which the student is released to the care of the staff member until such time as the student is returned to their next destination and designated supervision. It should not be expected that other staff members will accept that responsibility without the express approval of an administrator. In other words, staff members are “on-duty” from the time they accept responsibility for a student until that student is returned to their next destination and designated supervision.

Reporting Violations

Students and/or their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the principal [or other appropriate administrator] if they believe that a teacher or other staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates this policy.

Staff members are required to notify promptly the appropriate building administrator or superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of this policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in a referral to the Department of Health and Human Services and/or law enforcement in accordance with board’s policy.

Policy to be Included in Handbooks [or disseminated by other means]

This policy shall be included in all employee, student and volunteer handbooks. All employees, volunteers and coaches shall sign that they received and agree to comply with this policy.

Cross Reference: ACAA-Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
JLF – Report Child Abuse and Neglect