

General Personnel

Administrative Procedure - Employee Conduct Standards

Professional and ethical behavior is expected of all District staff members. The standards listed below serve as a notice of expected conduct. The standards are intended to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of students and employees, ensure the community a degree of accountability within the School District, and define misconduct justifying disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. The listed standards are not a complete list of expectations, and depending on the factual context, an employee may be disciplined for conduct that is not specifically listed. The conduct standards apply to all District employees to the extent they do not conflict with an applicable collective bargaining agreement; in the event of a conflict, the provision is severable and the applicable bargaining agreement will control. In addition, each educator must comply with 5:120-E, *Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators*, adopted by the Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE) (23 Ill.Admin.Code Part 22).

All school employees shall:

1. Exhibit positive examples of preparedness, punctuality, attendance, self-control, language, and appearance.
2. Exemplify honesty and integrity. Violations of this standard include, but are not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting the professional qualifications of oneself or another individual or information submitted in connection with job duties or during the course of an official inquiry/investigation.
3. Maintain professional, appropriate relationships and boundaries with all students, both in and outside the school, and attend all in-service trainings on educator ethics, teacher-student conduct, and school employee-student conduct for all personnel (105 ILCS 5/10-22.39), as well as all required trainings on child abuse, grooming behaviors, and boundary violations (325 ILCS 5/4(j), 105 ILCS 5/10-23.12, and 5/10-23.13 (*Erin's Law*)). Violations of this standard include, but are not limited to: (a) committing any act of child abuse or cruelty to children; (b) willfully or negligently failing to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/); (c) engaging in harassing behavior, including but not limited to sexually harassing a student; (d) willfully or negligently failing to report an instance of suspected sexual harassment as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681 *et seq.*), (e) providing a recommendation of employment for an employee, contractor, or agent that the employee knows, or has probable cause to believe, has engaged in sexual misconduct with a student or minor in violation of the law, as prohibited by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7926), (f) engaging in *grooming* as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25; (g) engaging in prohibited grooming behaviors, including *sexual misconduct* as defined in Board policy 5:120, *Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest*; (h) furnishing tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, or any other illegal/unauthorized substance, including e-cigarettes, to any

student or allowing a student under his or her supervision to use tobacco, alcohol, cannabis (including medical cannabis unless the student is authorized to be administered a medical cannabis infused product by the school employee pursuant to *Ashley's Law*), or any other illegal/unauthorized substance; and (i) violating expectations and guidelines for employee-student boundaries set forth in 5:120-AP2, E, *Expectations and Guidelines for Employee-Student Boundaries*.

4. Maintain a safe and healthy environment, free from being impaired by and/or under the influence of prohibited substances to ensure high quality performance for the District and its students. The use of illegal drugs and/or abuse and misuse of alcohol, drugs, and other lawful product while on District premises or while performing work for the District diminishes the District's credibility and ability to educate students about drug and substance abuse prevention pursuant to Board policy 6:60, *Curriculum Content*. Violations of this standard include, but are not limited to, engaging in any of the prohibited activities listed in the District's drug- and alcohol-free workplace policy. Examples include using or being impaired by or under the influence of illegal drugs; abusing, misusing, and/or being impaired by or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, and/or other lawful products when performing work for the District when impairment is detectable regardless of when and/or where the use occurred; and/or using or being impaired or under the influence of or possessing medical cannabis in a school bus or on school grounds.
5. Maintain a safe and healthy environment, free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, hazing, and violence, and free from bias and discrimination. Violations of this standard include, but are not limited to: (a) unless specifically permitted by the Firearm Concealed Carry Act, carrying a firearm on or into any District controlled building, real property, or parking area, or any transportation vehicle paid for in whole or in part with public funds; (b) willfully or negligently failing to immediately report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect or of gender harassment; (c) knowingly failing to report hazing to supervising educational authorities or, in the event of death or great bodily harm, to law enforcement; and (d) failing to appropriately respond to a witnessed or reported incident of student-on-student bullying, harassment, hazing, or teen dating violence.
6. Comply with the Professional Testing Practices for Educators, prepared and published by ISBE for educators who administer any standardized test (at www.isbe.net/Documents/prof-test-prac.pdf). This document contains numerous examples of actions that violate test security; actions that must not be part of test preparation; actions that must not occur during test administration; and actions that must be avoided when reporting test results.
7. Honor the public trust when entrusted with public funds and property by acting with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Violations of this standard include, but are not limited to: (a) misusing public or school-related funds; (b) failing to account for funds collected from students or parents/guardians; (c) submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay; (d) co-mingling District or school funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and (e) using school property without the approval of the supervising school official.
8. Maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents/guardians, community members, and businesses concerning business dealings and when accepting gifts and favors. Violations of this standard include, but are not limited to, soliciting students or parents/guardians to

purchase supplies or services from the employee or to participate in activities that financially benefit the employee without fully disclosing the interest.

9. Respect the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements. Violations of this standard include, but are not limited to: (a) disclosing confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law; and (b) disclosing confidential information restricted by State or federal law.
10. Demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and attend all in-service trainings on educator ethics, teacher-student conduct, and school employee-student conduct for all personnel (105 ILCS 5/10-22.39). Unethical conduct includes any conduct that impairs the employee's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position or a pattern of behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.
11. Comply with all State and federal laws and rules regulating public schools and Board policies, including but not limited to: 2:105 (*Ethics and Gift Ban*), 4:165 (*Awareness and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Prohibited Grooming Behaviors*), 5:10 (*Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment*), 5:20 (*Workplace Harassment Prohibited*), 5:30 (*Hiring Process and Criteria*), 5:50 (*Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace; E-Cigarette, Tobacco, and Cannabis Prohibition*), 5:60 (*Expenses*), 5:90 (*Abused and Neglected Child Reporting*), 5:100 (*Staff Development Program*), 5:120 (*Employee Ethics; Conduct; and Conflict of Interest*), 5:130 (*Responsibilities Concerning Internal Information*), 5:140 (*Solicitations By or From Staff*), 5:170 (*Copyright*), 5:180 (*Temporary Illness or Temporary Incapacity*), 5:200 (*Terms and Conditions of Employment and Dismissal*), 5:230 (*Maintaining Student Discipline*), 5:280 (*Duties and Qualifications*), 5:290 (*Employment Termination and Suspensions*), 6:235 (*Access to Electronic Networks*), 7:20 (*Harassment of Students Prohibited*), 7:180 (*Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment*), 7:190 (*Student Behavior*), 7:340 (*Student Records*), and 8:30 (*Visitors to and Conduct on School Property*).

Conviction of any employment disqualifying criminal offense listed in 105 ILCS 5/10-21.9 or 5/21B-80 will result in dismissal.

Violations of Policy 5.120 and related code of conduct standards, including those set forth herein and in the District's Expectations and Guidelines for Employee-Student Boundaries, or failure to report such violations, may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Any applicable provision in a contract, bargaining agreement, or State law will control the disciplinary process. Employees should report prohibited behaviors and/or boundary violations in accordance with Board policy with Board Policies 2.260, Uniform Grievance Procedure; 2.265, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure; and 5.90, Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

EMPLOYEE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

All School District personnel are expected to maintain professional, respectful, and cooperative relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and community members. Accordingly, District personnel must adhere to generally recognized professional conduct standards, including but not limited to the following:

1. Demonstrate appropriate and professional preparedness, punctuality, attendance, language, communications, and appearance.
2. Exemplify honesty and integrity.
3. Maintain professional, appropriate relationships and boundaries with all students, whether during or outside of school.
4. Refrain from being impaired and/or under the influence of alcohol, illegal or prohibited drugs, and/or prohibited substances to maintain a safe and healthy environment and quality instruction and/or performance for the District and its students.
5. Maintain an environment free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, hazing, discrimination, and violence.
6. Maintain integrity with members of the school or District community concerning donations, fundraising, business dealings, gifts, and favors.
7. Respect and maintain the confidentiality of student and personnel records, test materials, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements, or protected by State and Federal privacy laws.
8. Demonstrate conduct that is aligned with the *Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators*, incorporated by reference into this procedure, and conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.
9. Comply with all applicable State and federal laws and Board policies.

Expectations for Employee-Student Boundaries

District employees must at all times, whether during or outside of school, maintain appropriate and professional employee-student boundaries and relationships. Relationships between students and School District employees is inherently unbalanced, as District employees are uniquely positioned as individuals who care for and have authority and influence in relation to students. District employees may violate appropriate employee-student boundaries when they misuse their position of power over a student in a way that compromises the student's physical or mental health, safety, or general welfare. Employees must recognize potential negative consequences for students and/or employees engaging in certain behaviors with students or allowing inappropriate conduct to continue.

Recognizing the age and developmental level of District students, some examples of inappropriate employee conduct that may lead to a breach of employee-student boundaries include, but are not limited to:

1. Regarding students as peers and/or engaging in peer-like behavior with students.
2. Sharing personal issues or adult relationship issues with students.
3. Favoring certain students by inviting them to meetings during non-instructional times to “hang out” or giving certain students gifts or special privileges.
4. Meeting with a student off-campus without the parent/guardian’s knowledge and/or permission.
5. Dating a student or requesting to date a student, or sexual or romantic invitations or advances toward a student.
6. Participating in or requesting participation in a meeting with a student outside the employee’s professional role.
7. Transporting a student in a District or private vehicle alone and/or without appropriate authorization.
8. Taking, possessing and/or using photos and/or videos of students for non-educational purposes, or without District administration authorization.
9. Inviting students to an employee’s home.
10. Adding or “friending” students on personal social networking sites.
11. Privately messaging students through social media, personal phone numbers, or personal email accounts.
12. Making sexually suggestive comments, engaging in sexualized or romantic dialogue, commenting on a student’s physical attributes or excessively flattering a student.
13. Massages, tickling, lingering or excessive touching, or sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with a student.

Instead, the District expects employees to abide by the following non-exhaustive standards when interacting with students:

- Conduct any one-on-one conference with students in a classroom with the door open.
- Meeting with students off-campus only with parent/guardian knowledge or permission (for example, when providing pre-arranged tutoring or coaching).
- Limit communication to what is necessary for educational and/or extracurricular activities.
- Use District-approved methods for communicating with students.
- Only transport students in District or private vehicles with administrative authorization.
- Take, possess, or use photos/videos of students only for educational purposes, with eligible student or parent/guardian consent and District administration authorization.
- Abide by relevant and applicable student records laws and Board policies with respect to confidentiality of student records.

The District understands that some employees may have pre-existing relationships with students or families unrelated to the school environment. The expectations set forth above are not intended to prohibit or limit appropriate interactions with such students or families, provided that the employee is aware of and maintains appropriate employee-student boundaries during all interactions.

Violations of Professional Conduct Standards

Violations of Board Policy 5.120 or this Employee Code of Professional Conduct, or failure to report a violation of the Employee Code of Professional Conduct, may subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Employees are expected to report prohibited behaviors and/or boundary violations in accordance with Board Policies 2.260, Uniform Grievance Procedure; 2.265, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure; and 5.90, Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Violations of the employee professional conduct policy may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Failing to comply with or adhere to any of the expectations set forth herein.
2. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting professional qualifications or information submitted in the application and/or hiring process.
3. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information during the course of an inquiry or investigation.
4. Committing any act of child abuse, neglect or cruelty to children.
5. Willfully or negligently failing to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/).
6. Engaging in harassing behavior, including but not limited to sexually harassing a student.
7. Willfully or negligently failing to report sexual harassment as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681 *et seq.*).
8. Providing a recommendation of employment for an employee, contractor, or agent that the employee knows, or has probable cause to believe, has engaged in sexual misconduct with a student or minor in violation of the law, as prohibited by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7926).
9. Engaging in *grooming* as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25.
10. Engaging in grooming behaviors, including but not limited to *sexual misconduct*, which is defined in Board Policy 5:120 as (i) any act, including but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, (ii) by an employee or agent of the District with direct contact with a student, (iii) that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - A sexual or romantic invitation
 - Dating or soliciting a date

- Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog
 - Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student
 - Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature
 - A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student
11. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, or any other illegal/unauthorized substance, including e-cigarettes, to any student or allowing a student under his or her supervision to use tobacco, alcohol, cannabis (including medical cannabis unless the student is authorized to be administered a medical cannabis infused product by the District employee pursuant to *Ashley's Law*), or any other illegal/unauthorized substance.
 12. Engaging in any of the prohibited activities listed in the District's drug- and alcohol-free workplace policy.
 13. Carrying a firearm on or into any District-controlled building, real property, or parking area, or any District transportation vehicle, unless specifically permitted by law.
 14. Knowingly failing to report hazing to supervising educational authorities or, in the event of death or great bodily harm, to law enforcement.
 15. Failing to appropriately respond to a witnessed or reported incident of student-on-student bullying, harassment, hazing, or teen dating violence.
 16. Misusing District-related funds.
 17. Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents/guardians.
 18. Submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay.
 19. Comingling District funds with personal funds or accounts.
 20. Using District property without appropriate authorization.
 21. Soliciting students or parents/guardians to purchase supplies or services from the employee or to participate in activities that financially benefit the employee without fully disclosing the interest.
 22. Disclosing confidential information concerning student records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, or assessment/testing results, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law.
 23. Disclosing confidential information restricted by State or federal law.
 24. Any other violation of, or conduct inconsistent with, State or federal law or Board policy, administrative directives, or generally recognized professional conduct standards.

This list of employee conduct standards is not exhaustive; therefore, an employee may be disciplined for conduct that is not specifically listed above.

Training

District personnel are expected to attend all required trainings on educator ethics, child abuse, grooming behaviors, and boundary violations, among other required training as directed by the District.