Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide all district staff, students and volunteers with information to increase their awareness of their role in protecting children from inappropriate conduct by adults and to ensure that contact and communication with students are conducted in a professional manner.

The School Board expects all staff and volunteers to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their interaction with students. Staff and volunteers are required to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, through consistently and fairly applied discipline and established and maintained professional boundaries.

Interactions between Staff and Students

The interactions and relationships between staff 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 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’s duties in the district.

Staff shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvements with individual students. Any appearance of impropriety should be avoided. Intimate relationships between school personnel, contracted service providers, volunteers and students are prohibited. In addition to regular classroom instruction and extracurricular activities, appropriate occasions when school personnel, contracted service providers, and volunteers may interact with students beyond the school day include before and after care, tutoring to improve students’ academic skills, mentoring that provides students with positive role models, and hosting school-sanctioned or school-sponsored activities and events that reinforce positive behaviors.
One-to-one tutoring and mentoring offered during school or non-school hours must take place at the school or an off-site location approved by the principal or appropriate supervisor. When one-to-one tutoring and mentoring take place away from the school, written permission from the parent/guardian must be obtained. Volunteers on district property must be under the supervision of a district staff member.

Even during these and similar events during non-school hours, school personnel, contracted service providers and volunteers are acting in their professional capacity and must maintain the highest ethical standards.

Electronic Communication

The School Board supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, district employees acting in their district capacity are prohibited from inappropriate online socializing, phone calls, texting, skyping, instant messaging, or use of any other telecommunications device, or from engaging in any conduct that violates the law, district policies or other generally recognized professional standards. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. Nothing in this policy prohibits employees, faculty, staff or students from the use of approved educational websites if such sites are used solely for educational purposes.

Policy Violations

Staff shall discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they suspect or are unsure whether their conduct, or the conduct of other staff, is inappropriate or constitutes a violation of this policy. If a person is dissatisfied with the response of the building administrator or supervisor, he/she may bring it to the attention of the Executive Director of Schools or follow the formal complaint process in Policy No. 4220. If the violation deals with harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the process in Policy Nos. 3207 and 3208 should be followed.

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 his or her designee is authorized to develop training and a procedure to accompany this policy.

Adopted: October 2011
Revised: July 2013
Cross Reference: Policy Nos. 5006; 3207; 3207SP.A; 3207SP.B; 3208; 3208SP; 3240; 3200; 5251
Related Superintendent Procedure:
Previous Policies: N/A
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
Management Resources: