



PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES – 415

Rationale

Employees are always in a professional relationship with their students characterized by boundaries that must not be violated or compromised. In their professional role they do not behave as a friend or parent.

Policy

School personnel must treat their students with courtesy and dignity and maintain objectivity in their relationships.

Procedure

The following are examples of boundary violations that must be avoided:

1. Meeting with an individual student behind closed doors without the opportunity for observation by other adults, with the exception of students requiring assistance with toileting and/or dressing for whom there is a signed consent from the parent/guardian for one adult to assist the child.
2. Using sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or materials with students.
3. Touching a student without valid reason, i.e.
 - a. Kissing a student or allowing him or her to kiss you
 - b. Lengthy hugs or forceful frontal hugs
 - c. Cuddling or tickling
 - d. *Piggy-back rides*
 - e. Lap-sitting
 - f. Stroking a student's hair
4. Holding conversations of a personal nature or having contact with students via written or electronic means without valid context (outside of a professional/educational context).
5. Texting or online communication with students on the adult's personal email or being "friends" on social networking sites.
6. Sharing or soliciting personal information without a valid reason.
7. Asking students to keep secrets.
8. Attending parties or socializing with students without permission of school and/or parents.
9. Inviting a student or students to your home, without appropriate supervision and parental consent.
10. Drinking or being under the influence of alcohol while supervising students/offering alcohol to students.
11. Driving an individual student (except in emergency).

The following are examples of actions considered appropriate and respectful of personal and professional boundaries:

1. Communicating class assignments on school e-mail.
2. Limiting physical contact appropriately, i.e.
 - a. Restraining a student from physically harming self or others.
 - b. Affirming a student with a pat on the hand, shoulder or back.
 - c. Placing a hand gently on a student's hand or forearm.
 - d. Shaking a participant's hand in greeting.
 - e. Short hugs.
 - f. High fives.



CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF KAMLOOPS DIOCESE

HUMAN RESOURCES

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3. Obtaining student medical information to be taken on a school trip.
4. Sharing information (with family consent) about a family death for the purpose of supporting that student.
5. Protecting confidentiality and personal privacy/discouraging gossip.
6. Attending a school sponsored graduation event.
7. Accepting an invitation to a family dinner or an out of school activity such as a concert, recital, sporting event.

The following are examples of protective strategies that reduce the potential for real or perceived boundary violations:

1. Having more than one employee/adult present whenever possible.
2. Meeting with multiple students wherever possible.
3. Discouraging/correcting inappropriate conversations between/among students.
4. Wearing appropriate and modest attire at all times when working with students and ensuring that students do like-wise.

All real or perceived violations of personal and professional boundaries must be addressed and/or disclosed. Depending on the nature of the violation, this action may consist of:

1. Reporting the violation to the principal, or, if the principal is the individual who has been perceived to have violated personal or professional boundaries, reporting to the superintendent of schools.
2. Reminding a student or colleague about the real or perceived inappropriateness of their actions.
3. Reporting suspected child abuse to the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development or, in the case of an Aboriginal child, reporting to the Aboriginal Child and Family Service Agency.
4. Reporting to police.

References

Policy 308 Major Complaints
Policy 507 Responding to Student Abuse and Neglect
Policy 508 Field-Trips/Off-Site Experiences
Policy 417 Risk Management
Policy 316 Volunteers

Date Approved: May 2012
Date(s) Revised: IP June 2023