

GBEBB Staff conduct with students

STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

The Regional School Unit 1 Board expects all staff members, including teachers, substitute 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 while engaged in school-related functions.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the interactions and relationships between staff members and students are based on 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.

The Board understands that staff members may interact with and have friendships with families of students outside of school. This policy is not intended to prohibit such interactions provided that professional boundaries are maintained at all times.

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

Unacceptable Conduct

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

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;
2. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship;
3. Engaging in sexual banter, allusions, jokes or innuendos with students;
4. Asking a student to keep a secret
5. Disclosing personal, family, sexual, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students.
6. Addressing students with terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner; and

7. Permitting students to address the staff member by first name, nickname or otherwise in an overly familiar manner.
8. "Friending" students or engaging in any other interactions on social media or through digital applications (outside of any school-approved activity);
9. Communicating with students on non-school matters through text messages, phone calls, emails, Messenger or any other digital methods, or by letters, notes or any other means (unless the student's parent approves of the activity, e. g, in the context of employment or participation in community activities);

Before engaging in the following activities, staff members should consult with their building principal or supervisor, as appropriate:

- Being alone with individual students out of the view of others;
- Driving students home;
- Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home
- Visiting a student's home, unless on official school business that is known and agreed to by the parent;
- 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 or except as participants in organized community activities.

It is understood that students may share their personal or family problems and/or relationships with staff members. Staff members are expected to be helpful to support the needs of the student. If necessary, staff members will refer a student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff.

Reporting Violations

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

Staff members must promptly notify the Superintendent or building administrator 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 referral to the Department of Human Services and/or law enforcement in accordance with the Board's policy on Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.

School Unit Obligation to Report to Maine Department of Education (MDOE)

Any staff member holding a credential should be aware that violation of this policy may result in revocation or suspension of a certificate if it endangers the health, safety or welfare of a student.

The Superintendent/designee will notify the MDOE immediately if a credential holder is disciplined, suspended or terminated as a result of a “covered investigation” (as defined in 20-A MRS § 13025) in which the school unit determined that a student’s health, safety or welfare was endangered.

As soon as practicable, the school unit will provide to the MDOE any final report produced in support of the school unit’s decision to discipline, suspend or terminate the credential holder. The credential holder may submit a written rebuttal to the report to the MDOE.

The Superintendent/designee will notify the MDOE immediately if a credential holder who is the subject of a covered investigation leaves the school unit’s employment for any reason prior to the conclusion of the covered investigation.

Dissemination of Policy

This policy shall also be included in all employee, student and volunteer handbooks.

Cross Reference: ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students GCSA – Employee and Volunteer Use of Computers, Electronic Devices, School Network and the Internet GCSA-R – Employee and Volunteer Computer/Device and Internet Use Rules JLF - Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Adopted: December 20, 2010

Approved: January 24, 2011

Revised: April 25, 2016; June 16, 2025

Revision #2

Created 7 April 2022 15:36:15 by Matt Frey-Davis

Updated 17 June 2025 13:01:00 by Kimberly Burgess