

## **Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries**

### **Purpose**

This policy provides all staff, students, volunteers, and community members with information about their role in protecting children from inappropriate conduct by adults. This policy applies to all district staff and volunteers. For purposes of this policy and its procedure, the terms "district staff," "staff member(s)," and "staff" also include volunteers.

### **General Standards**

The board expects all district staff to maintain the highest professional standards when they interact with students. District staff are required to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning by consistently maintaining professional boundaries.

Professional staff/student boundaries are consistent with the legal and ethical duty of care that district employees have for students.

The interactions and relationships between district staff and students should be based upon mutual respect, trust, and commitment to the professional boundaries between staff and students in and outside of the educational setting, and consistent with the educational mission of the district.

District staff will not intrude on a student's physical and emotional boundaries unless the intrusion is necessary to serve a demonstrated educational purpose. An educational purpose is one that relates to the staff member's duties in the district. Inappropriate boundary invasions can take various forms. Any type of sexual conduct with a student is an inappropriate boundary invasion.

Additionally, staff members are expected to be aware of the appearance of impropriety in their own conduct and the conduct of other staff when interacting with students. Staff members will notify and discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they suspect or question whether their own or another staff member's conduct is inappropriate or constitutes a violation of this policy.

The board recognizes that staff may have familial and pre-existing social relationships with parents or guardians and students. Staff members should use appropriate professional judgment when they have a dual relationship to students to avoid violating this policy, the appearance of impropriety, and the appearance of favoritism. Staff members shall proactively discuss these circumstances with their building administrator or supervisor.

### **Use of Technology**

The board supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, when the communication is unrelated to school work or other legitimate school business district staff are encouraged to send a copy of that communication to their supervisor or another adult. This includes but is not limited to communicating with students by phone, email, text, instant messenger or other forms of electronic communication. Simply put, staff members are prohibited from sending electronic messages to a single student. District staff members are prohibited from engaging in any conduct on social networking websites that violates the law, district policies or procedures, or other generally

recognized professional standards. Additionally, staff are discouraged from “friending” and or “following” students on social media.

Staff whose conduct violates this policy may face discipline and/or termination consistent with the district’s policies and procedures, acceptable use agreement, and collective bargaining agreements, as applicable.

The superintendent/designee will develop protocols for reporting and investigating allegations and develop procedures and training to accompany this policy.

Cross References:                   3205 - Sexual Harassment of Students Prohibited  
  3207 - Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying  
  3210 - Nondiscrimination  
  3421 - Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Prevention

Legal References:                   Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972  
  Chapter 9A.44, RCW – Sex offenses  
  Chapter 9A.88, RCW – Indecent exposure – Prostitution  
  RCW 28A.400.320 Crimes against children – Mandatory  
  termination of classified employees – Appeal – Recovery of  
  salary or compensation by district  
  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  
  Chapter 28A.640, RCW Sexual Equality  
  Chapter 28A.642, RCW Discrimination Prohibition  
  Chapter 49.60, RCW – Washington State Law Against  
  Discrimination  
  Chapter 181-87 WAC Professional certification – Acts of  
  unprofessional conduct  
  Chapter 181-88 WAC Definitions of sexual misconduct, verbal  
  and physical abuse - Mandatory disclosure – Prohibited  
  agreements

Management Resources: 2019 - March 2019 - March Policy Issue  
2015 - October Policy Issue

Adoption Date: April 12, 2010  
Sequim School District No. 323  
Classification: Encouraged  
WSSDA Revised Dates: 02.10; 12.11; 10.15; 03.19

SSD \*9.19; 7.19;