

## 6252 PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES BETWEEN STAFF AND STUDENTS

The Grand Island Public Schools staff are responsible for conducting themselves professionally and for teaching and modeling high standards of behavior and civic values, both at and away from school. Staff are required to establish and maintain professional boundaries with students. They may be friendly with students, but they are the students' teachers, not their friends, and they must take care to see that this line does not become blurred.

GIPS supports the use of technology to communicate with students for legitimate educational purposes. However, school district staff are responsible for conducting themselves professionally, exercising appropriate judgment, and teaching and modeling high standards of behavior and civic values, regardless of location. This applies to staff conduct and interactions with students and to material they post on personal web sites, blogs, and other social networking sites including, but not limited to, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Other. District staff are prohibited from inappropriate technological communication including but not limited to texting, online socializing or social networking (including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, and Other), internet use, e-mail, blogging, or any other electronic communication that violates the law, district policies, or the Regulations and Standards for Professional Practices Criteria, commonly known as Rule 27 of the Nebraska Department of Education ("Rule 27").

Unless an employee has a legitimate educational purpose, the following behaviors are a violation of this policy. The following list is intended to be illustrative and does not describe every kind of prohibited behavior.

- Communicating with students about sex unless the student is reporting abuse or assault which is appropriately reported by the employee.
- Joking with students about matters involving sex, using double entendre or making suggestive remarks of a sexual nature.
- Sharing, showing, displaying or otherwise exposing a student or students to sexually inappropriate material or objects with students.
- Displaying or otherwise exposing a student to pornography.
- Making any sexual advance or engaging in any activity of a sexual or romantic nature with a student.
- Engaging in any type of dating, romantic or sexual contact with a current student of the district, regardless of the age of the student.
- Engaging in sexual activity, a romantic relationship, or dating a student or a former student within one year of the student graduating or otherwise leaving the District.
- "Grooming," which includes building trust with a student and individuals close to the student in an effort to gain access to and time alone with the student, with the ultimate goal of engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration with the student, regardless of when in the student's life the sexual contact or sexual penetration would take place.
- Kissing of any kind with a student.
- "Friending" or otherwise authorizing or requesting student access to personal social media accounts. This prohibition shall not apply to social media accounts created solely for class or educationally related matters to which all of the employees' students are allowed or offered access.
- Intruding on a student's personal space such as, by touching unnecessarily, positioning too closely, or staring at a portion of the student's body such as, breasts, buttocks, or similar body parts.
- Initiating unwanted physical contact with a student.
- Playing favorites or permitting a specific student to engage in conduct that is not tolerated from other students.
- Discussing the employee's personal issues or problems with a student.

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- Providing counseling for, attempting to solve, or solving a student's personal problems or issues without engaging trained personnel.
- Giving a student a gift of a personal nature.
- Engaging in activities with a student one-on-one not sponsored by the school without express permission of a school administrator.
- Any other behavior that exploits or attempts to exploit the special position of trust and authority between an employee and student.
- Transporting a student in the employee's vehicle without first obtaining the express permission of the student's parents or a school administrator.
- Disclosing confidential student records or information.
- Disclosing confidential personnel records or information of other school district employees, agents, or volunteers.
- Behaving in any manner that results in a disruption to the school environment or that impairs the employee's ability to perform his or her employment duties or to be an effective employee.
- Using an employment title or including any reference to the employee's affiliation with the school district unless the communication is school related and in compliance with the law, district policies, or Rule 27.
- Including school mascots, symbols, logos, or other district trademarks in non-school related communications.

Appropriate exceptions are permitted to the foregoing for legitimate health or educational purposes and for reasons of family relationships between employees and their children who are students in the District. A staff member seeking an exception must receive advance approval from his or her administrator. If a staff member is unable to communicate with an administrator in advance (such as in the event of an emergency), the staff member must notify the administrator as soon as possible, but not later than 24 hours immediately following the event.

Any person (student, parent, staff) who suspects a District employee of engaging in any prohibited conduct under this policy, including grooming, should contact the Superintendent or designee as soon as practical. School district employees are required to immediately notify an administrator if they become aware of any situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

An employee who violates this policy may face discipline, up to and including termination of employment, and may be referred to the appropriate certification or credentialing agencies for further discipline.

A violation of this policy will result in referral to the Department of Health and Human Services, law enforcement, or both.

Nothing in this policy should be construed to (1) limit an employee's right to speak as a citizen about matters of public concern, (2) prohibit an employee from communicating with students about non-school organizations or activities for which the employee is a coach or supervisor as long as the employee's communication is in compliance with the non-school organization's standards of conduct and Rule 27 or (3) regulate any communication that is unrelated to the employee's position of employment with the school district and otherwise protected by the United States Constitution and the Nebraska Constitution.

Legal References: Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 USC § 254  
FCC Order adopted August 10, 2011  
47 USC § 254(h)(1)(b); 47 CFR 54.500(b) and 68 FR 36932 (2003) (E-rate restrictions)  
Neb. Rev. Stat. § 49-14,101.01 (Political Accountability and Disclosure Act)

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The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)  
5 U.S.C. § 552, As Amended by Public Law No. 104-231, 110 Stat. 3048  
Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-866  
Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 27 Nov. 12, 2003(Rule 27  
Regulations and Standards for Professional Practices Criteria)  
LB 1080 (2020)

Cross Reference: 8550 CHILD ABUSE  
8551 ABUSE OF STUDENTS BY STAFF  
8451 PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION  
6252 PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES BETWEEN STAFF AND STUDENTS  
1311 BULLYING AND HARASSMENT (Staff)

Policy Adopted: 7.12.2012  
Policy Revised: 03.10.2016  
Policy Revised: 03.07.2019  
Policy Revised: 03.16.2020  
Policy Revised: 02.11.2021

The Grand Island Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity that it operates. The District is required by Title IX (20 U.S.C. § 1681) and 34 CFR Part 106 not to discriminate in such a manner. This requirement not to discriminate also applies to admission and employment. Any inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the District Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Civil Rights, or both. The GIPS Board of Education designates the following individuals to serve as GIPS Title IX Coordinators for students and staff and serve as Compliance Coordinator:

Title: Dr. Robin R. Dexter, Associate Superintendent  
Coordinator for Student Complaints and Compliance Coordinator  
Office address:  
Kneale Administration Building, 123 S. Webb Road, Grand Island, NE 68802  
Email: [rdexter@gips.org](mailto:rdexter@gips.org)  
Phone number: 308-385-5900

Title: Mr. Wayne Stelk, Chief of Human Capital Management  
Coordinator for Staff Complaints  
Office address:  
Kneale Administration Building, 123 S. Webb Road, Grand Island, NE 68802  
Email: [wstelk@gips.org](mailto:wstelk@gips.org)  
Phone number: 308-385-5900

For information regarding the Grand Island Public Schools procedure for complaints of sexual harassment including the complaint process, how to file a report or a complaint of sexual harassment, how to file a formal complaint of sexual harassment, and how the District will respond to such complaints see Board Policy, 6205 Staff and 8505 Student, located on the GIPS web site.