

OYSTER RIVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD	Policy Code: GBEB
Policy Committee Continued Review: 11,9/23, 12/14/23 & 1/18/24 School Board First Read: February 21, 2024 School Board Second Read/Adoption: March 6, 2024	Page 1 of 2 Category: Recommended

STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

The Oyster River School Board expects all staff members, including 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.

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust; an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in an educational setting; and consistent with the educational mission of the schools.

Prohibited 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 school board's discrimination and harassment policies;
2. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship;
3. Using their position to manipulate students for reasons that are prohibited by law.
4. Sexual banter, allusions, jokes or innuendoes with students;
5. Asking a student to keep a secret;
6. Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns or other private matters to one or more students;
7. Enlisting student(s) to relay communications of a personal or non-school related nature to another student or students.
8. Maintaining personal contact with a student or students via means of communication that are not authorized by the District.

Before engaging in the following activities without parents, staff members will review the activity with their building principal or supervisor, as appropriate:

1. Being alone with individual students out of public view;
2. Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home unless accompanied by the student's parent or with parental permission;
3. Visiting a student at home, unless on official school business (this does not preclude a staff member or their child visiting a student's home at the parent's invitation for a social or other event);
4. Exchanging personal gifts (beyond the customary student-teacher gifts);
5. 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. (This prohibition does not extend to community activities. Such as church or other events where there may be incidental social contact with students.) and/or
6. Facilitating meetings with a student or students off District property.

In formulating this policy, the Board understands that there are circumstances when staff members and/or their children have personal relationships with the families of students outside of school. The intent of this policy is not to prohibit all social contact between staff members and families outside of school. However, because of the trust placed in school staff by the community and our schools' responsibility to protect the well-being of students, staff members are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students at all times. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct or a planned activity may constitute a violation of this policy.

OYSTER RIVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD	Policy Code: GBEB
Policy Committee Continued Review: 11/ 9/23, 12/14/23 & 01/18/24 School Board First Read: February 21, 2024 School Board Second Read/Adoption: March 6, 2024	Page 2 of 2

STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS (continued)

Reporting Violations

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

Investigation

Reports of staff conduct that represents potential violations of this policy shall be investigated in accordance with District policy.

Response

The District shall take immediate action to ensure that conduct which violates this policy is stopped.

The District shall offer mental health and wellness support to students who are victims of conduct deemed to violate this policy.

Staff members are required to notify promptly the appropriate building administrator or superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Disciplinary Action

Staff violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Volunteers in violation of this policy will be dismissed.

Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Health and Human Services and law enforcement in accordance with state law.

Dissemination

This policy shall be included in all employees, student and volunteer handbooks and located in the Policies link on the school district web site.

Cross Reference: IJOC – School Volunteers
JICK - Bullying and Cyberbullying – Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention