



Professional Behaviors

**Greenwood School District 50
2011**

Student-Staff Relationships



Recent Headlines

- ***SC school teacher*** charged with sex with student
- ***SC Teacher*** admits inappropriate relations with student
- ***SC teacher*** sentenced to 10 years for having sex with ***student***
- ***SC teacher*** accused of sex with 5 boys

Text Messages

- Inappropriate text messages are continually being discovered involving school staff members and students.

Policy GBEB Staff Conduct

The Board of Trustees reaffirms one of the oldest beliefs in education: **One of the best methods of instruction is that of setting a good example.** The Board of Trustees expects the staff of the district to strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior and subsequently contribute to an appropriate school atmosphere.

Policy GBEB

To that end, in dress, conduct and ***interpersonal relationships***, all staff should recognize that they are being continually observed by students and that their actions and demeanor will be reflected in the conduct of the students.

Policy GBEB

Immoral conduct on the part of any employee will constitute grounds for immediate suspension. No employee will commit or attempt to induce students or others to commit an act or acts of immoral conduct, which may be harmful to others or bring discredit to the district. If it appears an employee may have violated the law, the district will cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

Policy GBEBB Staff Conduct With Students

All staff members are to keep all relationships between themselves and the students at their work site as professional ones. In situations where a staff member is in a position to have influence or power over a student, he/she is not to date or be involved in any way with the student, even if the relationship is consensual. Inappropriate social relations with students may constitute a form of sexual harassment and be subject to the provisions of the district policy JI, Sexual Harassment of Students.

Consequences

- Any employee or student who is found to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The district will take all other appropriate steps to correct or rectify the situation.

Defense

- The best defense we have is to be keen observers and report inappropriate actions.

Expectations

- Standards of behavior have to be established and enforced in a consistent manner.
- Supervisors have to continuously monitor for inappropriate activity and confront any suspicious behavior.
- Supervisors have to make clear the consequences for inappropriate activity.

Inappropriate Touching

- Inappropriate touching is certainly the easiest way to find yourself in the middle of an investigation and talking to people in uniforms.

Inappropriate Dress

- Dress as a professional in all circumstances. Dress often conveys wrong signals to adolescent teens because their whole world is wrapped around how one looks.

Inappropriate Conversations

- Ask if your conversation with students is the type of conversation you would like a teacher to have with your son or daughter.
- Avoid texting students. There are more appropriate ways to communicate with students.

One-on-One Meetings

- Never meet in a private area one-on-one with a student. This is a certain recipe for disaster. Make sure the door is open and anyone wanting to access your presence can do so with relative ease.

Self-Police

- Enter an agreement with a co-worker to monitor each other. Accept peer-to-peer coaching on this issue.

Recognize Your Stress or Anger

- We all have stressors in our lives.
- Recognize stress and how it can affect your performance and productivity.
- Take advantage of 50 CARE.
http://www.gwd50.org/16891087162952170/lib/16891087162952170/50_Care.mht

The Law

- Failure to report: misdemeanor, and fine up to \$500 and/or jail up to 6 months.
- False report: subject to civil action for actual & punitive damages, costs and attorney's fees.

Sexual Harassment



The Cost

- The Board of Trustees considers sexual harassment to be a major offense that may result in disciplinary action or dismissal of the offending employee.

The Policies

- GBAA Sexual Discrimination and Harassment
- GBAA-R Sexual Discrimination and Harassment Regulation
- GBEBB Staff Conduct with Students

- **The harasser requires the employee to submit to the conduct as an explicit or implicit condition of employment, status or promotion.**

- **The harasser uses the employee's submission to, or rejection of, the conduct as a basis for an employment decision.**

- **The harassment substantially interferes with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.**

- **The employee's submission to, or rejection of, the conduct is the basis for any decision affecting benefits, services, honors, programs or other available activities.**

Reporting Harassment

- An employee who feels that he/she is being harassed should immediately report such incident to the immediate supervisor of the accused employee or the appropriate human resources department official.

No No's

- Threats or intimidation of sexual relations
- Verbal abuses including graphic commentaries, innuendoes, comments or jokes
- Threats or insinuations that the person's employment, wages, promotional opportunities, work assignments or other conditions of employment may be adversely affected

Annual Training

- On an annual basis, administrators/supervisors will review with all employees the nature of sexual harassment, the procedures for registering a complaint about sexual harassment and the redress that is available.

Reporting Child Abuse



Mandatory Reporters

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Dentists
- Optometrists
- EMT Workers
- Mental Health
- Allied Health
- Clergy
- Teachers
- Counselors
- Principals (and assistants)
- Social Workers
- Substance Abuse Counselors
- Childcare Workers
- Foster Care Workers
- Police
- Undertakers (and staff)
- Funeral Directors (and staff)
- Film Processors
- Computer Technicians
- Judges

Child Abuse and Neglect Defined

- It is abuse or neglect when a child is injured by the intentional acts or omissions of an adult
- DSS gets involved in child abuse and neglect cases that involve a parent or guardian as the perpetrator

Child Abuse and Neglect Defined

- Physical or mental injury
- Excessive corporal punishment
- Sexual offenses
- Failure to supply food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care
- Abandonment
- Encouraging delinquency
- Substantial risk of abuse or neglect

Neglect

- Failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, or medical care, though financially capable of doing so

When Do You Report

- **When is there reason to report?**
 - when the child's physical or mental health or welfare is at risk; or,
 - when a child has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect.
- And, when this information is received in your professional capacity.

Reason to Believe

- Law requires report to be made when there is “reason to believe”
- Does not require the reporter to have conclusive proof
- Does not require proof beyond a reasonable doubt
- Information must be such that a reasonable person would rely upon it, including hearsay

Immunity from Liability

- Reporters are immune from civil and criminal liability for reporting child abuse and neglect in good faith
- Law presumes that child abuse and neglect reports are made in good faith

Failure to Report

- A person who is required to report child abuse and neglect and who fails to do so has committed a crime
 - punishable by \$500 fine and/or 6 months imprisonment

How to respond to the child:

- Listen attentively
- Do not probe for details
- Do not remove clothing
- Do not indicate disbelief, shock, or anger
- Explain actions you will take
- Do not give false assurances

Documentation

- Document the basis for your concern, including the physical and behavioral signs
- Document the child's statements to you, use the child's words
- Record the child's demeanor
- Record the date and agency individual to whom you spoke

Final Thoughts about Mandatory Reporting

- Must report if you have “reason to believe”
- Do not worry about retaliation
- Presumption that reports are made in good faith
- DSS and law enforcement must keep your identity confidential

Confidentiality

- DSS and law enforcement must keep the identity of the reporter confidential
- May share the name of the reporter with each other to further their investigations
- Reporter may also be required to testify

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Student Information

- Federal law protects the confidentiality of student education records as well as personally identifiable information contained in such records.

FERPA

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, protects the privacy of student educational records and assures parents the right to access those records.

Caution

- District employees are charged with maintaining the strict confidentiality of student education records and may release such information to others only with written consent of the parent, guardian or (in some cases) the student.
- Employees are cautioned to not discuss any information that could be construed as individual student information.

End of Module

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