

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT #33

Staff Conduct with Students

Maine School Administrative District #33 expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators, educational technicians, cooks, bus drivers, custodial staff, clerical staff, and others, to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their conduct with students. For purposes of this policy, staff members also include school volunteers.

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based on 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 Board policy;
2. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship;
3. For non-guidance/counseling staff, encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussion, staff members are expected to be supportive but to refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff. In either case, staff involvement should be limited to a direct connection to the student' school program;
4. Sexual banter, allusions, jokes or innuendoes with students;
5. Asking or encouraging students to keep specific information or incidents from their parents; and
6. Confiding in a student about your personal, family, and/or work issues.
7. Possessing, using, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illicit drug on school grounds or at school-sponsored student activities.

Before engaging in the following activities, staff members will review the activity with their building principal or supervisor, as appropriate:

1. Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home;
2. Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school through home visitations, by telephone, e-mail, the Internet, or letters (beyond homework or other legitimate school business);
3. Exchanging personal gifts; and/or

4. Socializing or spending time with students, other than family members, outside of school-sponsored events except as participants in organized community activities.

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

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.

Staff members are required to promptly notify the appropriate building administrator or Superintendent of Schools 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 Board policy.

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

Note: Exceptions to these guidelines may be made for children of staff relatives and personal friends.

History: Adopted Meeting #820 January 2, 2006