

Policy GBEB Staff Conduct

Last Issued 11/14

The board reaffirms one of the oldest beliefs in education, that "one of the best methods of instruction is that of setting a good example."

The board expects all staff members to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards in their conduct with students, parents/legal guardians, and coworkers. For the purpose of this policy, staff includes, but is not limited to, employees, contract service providers, school volunteers, student teachers, and interns.

All staff members are expected to act with integrity and honesty both on-duty and off-duty and be aware of the policy framework that governs staff behavior and day-to-day work performance. Staff must act in a manner that is consistent with the district's policies and sets a positive example for all.

To that end, in dress; in conduct, including conduct communicated or performed in person, in writing and electronically; and interpersonal relationships, all staff should recognize that they are being continuously observed by students, other employees, parents/legal guardians and community members, and that their actions and demeanor may impair their effectiveness as an employee. When interacting with students in all curricular and extracurricular activities, whether on or off campus, both online and off-line, staff members are expected to exercise good judgment and to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to an educational setting and consistent with the educational mission of the district.

The relationship between staff members and students in the district should be one of cooperation, understanding, mutual respect, and trust. All staff members will also treat each other with respect.

The personal life of a district employee, including the employee's personal use of non district-issued electronic equipment outside of working hours (such as email, text messages, instant messages, or social media through social networking sites and personal portrayal on the Internet), will be the concern of the administration if it impairs the employee's ability to be an effective teacher, administrator or support staff member; violates local, state or federal laws; and in the case of a certified employee, goes against his/her employment contract. Unprofessional conduct may subject the employee to disciplinary actions consistent with state law, federal law and/or board policy.

No employee will engage in immoral or criminal conduct, nor will he/she commit or attempt to induce students or others to commit an act or acts of immoral conduct or criminal conduct. If it appears an employee may have violated the law, the district will cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

While on duty and in the presence of students, employees will not use profanity or tobacco in any form and will not consume or be under the influence of intoxicating beverages. They will also not be involved in drug abuse or drug trafficking.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of to, actions that are considered misconduct while on duty, on or off district premises:

- possessing, using, selling, manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing any illegal drugs or alcohol while on duty, on or off district
- fighting or deliberately harming another individual
- being absent without approval
- refusing to follow a supervisor's instructions or directions
- neglect of duty (including, but not limited to, failure to follow a student's Individualized Education Program or 504 Plan, leaving students unsupervised, failure to discipline with consistency and/or failure to maintain proper building or classroom discipline, failure to take appropriate affirmative action when confronted with or after witnessing a situation in which a student is at risk of abuse or mental or physical injury, and/or inability or failure to effectively plan and present an organized lesson plan)

- failing to adhere to safety and health rules as established by state and federal law and board policy
- stealing, destroying, or vandalizing school property intentionally or through negligence; staff will be responsible for reimbursing the district for the cost of repairing or replacing damaged or stolen property
- possessing weapons on school property (unless otherwise authorized by law)
- using school property without proper authorization
- behaving in an inappropriate manner to the extent of adversely affecting the staff member's ability to perform his/her work and/or disrupting the educational environment
- using obscene language or demeaning or derogatory language which is unsuitable in the school setting
- communicating obscene visual material to a student or another staff member
- any behavior, overt or covert, of a sexual nature that may constitute professional misconduct and/or is violation of law or board policy
- disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment, or other private concerns to students
- disclosing information concerning a student, other than directory information, to any person not authorized to receive such information
- non-counseling or social work staff encouraging students to confide their personal, family problems, and/or personal relationship problems; staff should refer students to the guidance office if there is a need for counseling
- harassment, intimidation/bullying, or discrimination of, or retaliation against, a student or staff member
- asking students to keep secrets
- inciting students or other staff members to engage in illegal activity

The board understands that there are circumstances when staff members 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 and families outside of school. However, because of the trust placed in staff by the community, and the district's responsibility to protect the well-being of students, staff members are expected to avoid the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students at all times.

Staff members are encouraged to discuss concerns with their supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct or activities may constitute a violation of this policy. Staff members are required to notify a supervisor immediately if they become aware of a situation or behavior that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Violations of this policy will be grounds for placing an employee on administrative leave, with pay, pending an investigation and possible recommendation for termination of employment, consistent with district policy and state law.

Violations of this policy by other individuals in the district community including, but not limited to, contract workers, volunteers, student teachers, and interns will be grounds for the immediate termination of the program, activity, or job for which the individual is a participant.

Arrest of an employee

The board delegates specific authority to the superintendent or his/her designee to take appropriate employment action with regard to an employee who has been arrested. Should a district employee be arrested, he/she must immediately notify his/her principal and the director of human resources of the arrest and keep both apprised of the continued status of the criminal case against him/her.

- Staff members arrested for a misdemeanor offense which would indicate no danger or appearance of danger to students, fellow staff, or the district will generally not be subject to any employment action.
- Staff members arrested for a misdemeanor offense which would indicate a possible danger or appearance of danger to the school district, fellow staff, or to students will generally be suspended with pay, pending adjudication.
- Staff members arrested for a misdemeanor offense which would indicate a possible danger or appearance of danger to students but not to the school district or fellow staff will generally be reassigned to different responsibilities away from

students within the district, if such position is available, pending adjudication.

- Staff members arrested for a felony offense will generally be suspended with pay, pending adjudication. In certain circumstances, other employment action may be taken, up to and

Adopted 8/25/05; Revised 6/7/10, 11/20/14, 1/12/23

Adopted ^

Legal References:

A. S.C. Code of Laws, 1976 as amended:

1. **Section 16-3-755 - Sexual battery with a student.**
2. **Section 16-23-420, et seq. - Concealed weapons; school property exception.**
3. **Section 59-25-430 - Teacher dismissal; evident unfitness for teaching.**
4. **Section 59-25-450 - Teacher suspension.**

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