MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT #33

Staff Conduct with Students

Maine School Administrative District #33 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 intent of this policy is to ensure that the interactions and relationships between staff members and students are based upon mutual respect and trust; that staff members understand the importance of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries between adults and students in an educational setting; and that staff members conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the educational mission of the schools. It is understood that staff members may interact with and have friendships with students' families outside of school. This policy is not intended to prohibit such interactions and friendships, provided that professional boundaries are maintained at all times.

Prohibited Conduct

Examples of unacceptable conduct by staff members that are expressly prohibited include but are not limited to the following:

A. Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the Board's policy on Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students;

B. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship;

C. For non-guidance/counseling staff, encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to be supportive but to refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff for assistance.

D. Sexual banter, allusions, jokes or innuendos with students;

E. Asking a student to keep a secret;

F. Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students;

G. Addressing students with terms of endearment, pet names or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;

H. Permitting students to address you by your first name, nickname or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;

I. "Friending" students on social networking sites (outside of any school-approved activity); and

J. Communicating with students on non-school matters via computer, text message, phone calls, letters, notes or any other means.

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

A. Being alone with individual students out of public view;

B. Driving students home or to other locations;

C. Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home (unless the student's parent approves of the activity, such as when a student babysits or performs chores for a staff member);

D. Visiting a student at home or in another location, unless on official school business known to the parent;

E. Exchanging personal gifts (beyond the customary student-teacher gifts); and/or

F. 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 or 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 particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

Reporting Violations

Students and/or their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the Principal 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 Principal or Superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Health and Human Services, the District Attorney and/or law enforcement.

Policy to be Included in Handbooks

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

Cross Reference: ACAA-Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
JLF-Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

History:	Adopted	Meeting #820	January 2, 2006
	Revised	Meeting #908	November 9, 2011