



Lowell Joint School District

Professional Standards – Code of Ethics of the Education Profession

Preamble

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurturing of democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession and the California Standards for the Teaching Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards by which to judge conduct. Each employee is expected to abide by the Board adopted Guiding Goals and Core Values:

Guiding Goals:

- Academic Excellence – Learning for All Students
- Safe, Orderly, Positive, Respectful Learning Environment
- Highly Qualified Staff Providing High Quality Service
- School/Family/Community Partnerships and Communication
- Acquisition and Allocation of Resources to Support Fiscal Excellence

Core Values:

- Excellence
- Personal Integrity
- Social Responsibility and Respect
- Respect for National Heritage
- Traditional Values

Principle I(a). Commitment and Conduct to the Student

The educator strives to help each student realize his/her potential as a worthy, effective, and responsible member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals. Parents are affirmed as the primary moral educators of their children. Nevertheless, all educators are obligated to help foster civic virtues such as integrity, diligence, responsibility, cooperation, loyalty, fidelity, and respect-for the law, for human life, for others, and for self.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator:

1. The professional educator deals considerately and justly with each student, and seeks to

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- resolve problems, including discipline, according to law and school policy.
2. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning
 3. Shall not unreasonably deny the student access to varying points of view
 4. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress
 5. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety
 6. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement
 7. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social, or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly:
 - a. Exclude any student from participation in any program
 - b. Deny benefits to any student
 - c. Grant any advantage to any student
 8. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage
 9. Shall not disclose information in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law
 10. The professional educator makes a constructive effort to protect the student from conditions detrimental to learning, health, or safety.
 11. The professional educator endeavors to present facts without distortion, bias, or personal prejudice.

Principle I(b). Commitment Maintain Professional Staff/Student Boundaries

The purpose of this policy is to provide all staff, students, volunteers, contractors, and community members with information to increase their awareness of their role in protecting minors and adult-age students from inappropriate conduct by adults.

In a professional staff/student relationship, District employees shall maintain boundaries that are consistent with the legal and ethical duty of care that school personnel have for students. A boundary invasion is an act, omission, or pattern of behavior by a District employee that violates professional staff/student boundaries, does not have an educational purpose, and has the potential to abuse the staff/student relationship.

This policy addresses the relationship between students and District staff. The Board recognizes that staff may have familial and pre-existing social relationships with parents or guardians and students. Staff members should use appropriate professional judgment when they stand in a dual relationship to students so as to avoid violations of District policy, the appearance of impropriety, or the appearance of favoritism.

Unacceptable Conduct: Examples of inappropriate boundary invasions by staff members include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Any type of inappropriate physical contact or communication with a student or any other conduct that violates the Board's policies on Employee Conduct, Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying, Non-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, or Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), constitutes misconduct or any conduct between staff and students that would constitute a violation of law;
2. Showing pornography to a student;
3. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention beyond the professional staff/student relationship;
4. Socializing in gatherings or individually with students or groups of students who are consuming alcohol, drugs or tobacco;

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5. Providing alcohol, drugs, or tobacco to students;
6. Non-guidance/counseling staff members who encourage students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships to the staff member. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling staff. In either case, staff involvement should be limited to a direct connection to the student's school performance;
7. Sending or taking students on personal errands unrelated to any educational purpose;
8. Allowing students to use the staff member's personal vehicle for any purpose;
9. Banter, provocative teasing, jokes or innuendos of a sexual nature, demeaning and degrading comments directed to or about other students, staff or community members;
10. Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students;
11. Addressing students, or permitting students to address staff members with personalized terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;
12. Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by written or electronic means such as: Instant Messenger application, Internet chat rooms or other social networking Websites;
13. Sending phone, email, text messages, or other forms of written or electronic communication to students when the communication is unrelated to school work or other legitimate school business;
14. Exchanging personal gifts, cards or letters with an individual student which are unrelated to school activities;
15. Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for beverages, meals or movies, shopping, traveling, personal counseling sessions, recreational activities, parties, outside of school-sponsored events, except as participants in organized community activities;
16. Giving a student a ride alone, or with a small group of students in a personal staff vehicle in a non-emergency situation;
17. Unnecessarily invading a student's privacy, (e.g. intentionally walking in on the student in the bathroom).

Appearances of Impropriety: The following activities can create an actual impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Whenever possible, staff should avoid these situations. If unavoidable, these activities should be pre-approved by the appropriate administrator. If not pre-approved, the staff person must report the occurrence, to the appropriate administrator, as soon as possible:

1. Being alone with an individual student out of the view of others and engaging in intimate discussions or in close physical proximity without a legitimate educational purpose;
2. Inviting or allowing individual students to visit the staff member's home unless other adults are present, the student(s) are invited for an activity related to school, and the student's parent or guardian is informed and has consented;
3. Visiting a student, in his/her home, unless invited by the student's parent or guardian as part of a school activity;
4. Sending e-mails, text messages, or other electronic communications to the student, even when

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the communication relates to school business, except where the parent or guardian has consented to such communications and receives a copy of the communication;

5. Staff should use school e-mail address and phone numbers and the parents' phone numbers for communications with students, except in an emergency situation.

Reporting Violations: Child Abuse and Neglect: Students and their parents/guardians who believe a staff member, contractor, or volunteer may be engaging in conduct that constitutes boundary invasion are strongly encouraged to notify the building principal or the supervisor of the person suspected of engaging in inappropriate conduct.

Any staff member who becomes aware of conduct by another staff member, contractor, or volunteer that may constitute a boundary invasion are required to promptly notify the site principal or the supervisor of the staff member or volunteer suspected of engaging in inappropriate conduct.

All staff members who have reasonable cause to believe that a student has experienced sexual abuse by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer working in the school are required to make a report to Child Protective Services or law enforcement as required by District policy and State law.

Reporting suspected abuse to the building principal or supervisor does not relieve school personnel from their reporting responsibilities and timelines.

CODE OF ETHICS OF THE EDUCATION PROFESSION (CONTINUED)**Principle II. Commitment to the Profession and Ethical Practices/Performance**

The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service.

In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, to achieve conditions that attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons.

In fulfillment of the obligation of the profession, the staff member:

1. Shall not in any application for a professional position deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications.
2. Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.
3. Shall not assist any entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.
4. Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position.
5. Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
6. Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.
7. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or action.
8. The staff member applies for, accepts, or assigns a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications, and adheres to the terms of a contract or appointment.
9. The staff member maintains sound mental health, physical stamina, and social prudence necessary to perform the duties of any professional assignment.
10. The staff member continues professional growth.
11. The staff member complies with written local school policies and applicable laws and regulations that are not in conflict with this code of ethics.
12. The staff member does not intentionally misrepresent official policies of the school or educational organizations, and clearly distinguishes those views from his or her own personal opinions.
13. The staff member honestly accounts for all funds committed to his or her charge.
14. The staff member does not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

Principle III. Commitment to Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues

The professional staff, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, accords just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession.

1. The staff member does not reveal confidential information concerning colleagues unless required by law.
2. The staff member does not willfully make false statements about a colleague or the school system.

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3. The staff member does not interfere with a colleague's freedom of choice, and works to eliminate coercion that forces educators to support actions and ideologies that violate individual professional integrity.

Principle IV. Commitment to Ethical Conduct Toward Parents and Community

The professional staff pledges to protect public sovereignty over public education and private control of private education. The professional staff recognizes that quality education is the common goal of the public, boards of education, and educators, and that a cooperative effort is essential among these groups to attain that goal.

1. The professional educator makes concerted efforts to communicate to parents all information that should be revealed in the interest of the student.
2. The professional educator endeavors to understand and respect the values and traditions of the diverse cultures represented in the community and in his or her classroom.
3. The professional educator manifests a positive and active role in school/community relations.

Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of this regulation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement.

Source: National Education Association, 1975
Association of American Educators

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