

Lewis Center for Educational Research

**BP 5031: STUDENTS
 STAFF STUDENT INTERACTION**

Adopted: December 13, 2010

Revised:

The Lewis Center for Educational Research (“School”) recognizes its responsibility to make and enforce all rules and regulations governing student and staff behavior to bring about the safest and most effective learning environment possible.

I. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student.

For purposes of this policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee’s use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons, or to prevent damage to property.

For clarification purposes, the following examples are offered for direction and guidance of School personnel:

A. Examples of PERMITTED actions (NOT corporal punishment)

1. Stopping a student from fighting with another student;
2. Preventing a pupil from committing an act of vandalism;
3. Defending yourself from physical injury or assault by a student;
4. Forcing a pupil to give up a weapon or dangerous object;
5. Requiring an athletic team to participate in strenuous physical training activities designed to strengthen or condition team members or improve their coordination, agility, or physical skills;
6. Engaging in group calisthenics, team drills, or other physical education or voluntary recreational activities.

B. Examples of PROHIBITED actions (corporal punishment)

1. Hitting, shoving, pushing, or physically restraining a student as a means of control;
2. Making unruly students do push-ups, run laps, or perform other physical acts that cause pain or discomfort as a form of punishment;
3. Paddling, swatting, slapping, grabbing, pinching, kicking, or otherwise causing physical pain.

II. STAFF/STUDENT INTERACTION

A. Purpose

It is the purpose of this policy to provide additional specificity to the standards of conduct embodied in current School ethics-related rules and regulations so that the staff of the school will better understand the prohibitions and behavior boundaries incumbent upon them.

The rules of conduct set forth in this policy are not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of requirements, limitations, or prohibitions on staff conduct and activities established by School. Rather, they are intended to:

- (1) Alert staff to some of the more sensitive and often problematic matters involved in faculty/staff-student relationships;
- (2) Specify boundaries related to potentially sexual situations and conduct that is contrary to accepted norms of behavior and in conflict with duties and responsibilities of staff; and
- (3) Provide staff with clear guidance in conducting themselves in a manner that reflects high standards of professionalism.

It is important for the School to maintain a school-wide culture in which students and staff understand their responsibility to report misconduct without fearing retaliation from students, staff, or administration. In order to prevent abuse and/or exploitation, students and staff must know that the administration will support them when they report possible misconduct.

Although this policy gives clear direction regarding appropriate conduct between staff and students, each staff member is obligated to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents, students, colleagues, or school leaders. One helpful standard that can be quickly applied when assessing whether your conduct is appropriate is to ask yourself, “Would I be doing this if the student’s family, or my colleagues or family, were standing next to me?”

B. Boundaries

For the purposes of this policy, the term “boundaries” is defined as acceptable professional behavior by staff members while interacting with a student. Trespassing the boundaries of a student/teacher relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

C. Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member’s perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parent point of view. The objective of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is not

to restrain positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct.

Staff must understand their own responsibility for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is crucial that all employees learn this policy thoroughly and apply the lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour to their daily activities. Although good-natured, heartfelt interaction with students certainly fosters learning, student/staff interactions must always be guided by appropriate boundaries regarding activities, locations, and intentions.

D. Duty to Report

When any employee becomes aware of another staff member crossing the boundaries specified in this policy, he/she must speak directly to this staff member if the violation appears minor, and/or report the matter immediately to the School administration. If the observed behaviour appears significant, it is the duty of every staff member to immediately report the matter to the School administration. When in doubt, report it to the supervisor. It is the duty of the School administration to thoroughly investigate and remediate the situation as necessary. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness or concern of student behaviour that crosses appropriate boundaries, or where a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse.

E. Unacceptable Behaviors

The following non-exhaustive list of behavior shall be considered in violation of this policy:

- (a) Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal and intimate nature.
- (b) Kissing of any kind.
- (c) Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in either a public or private situation.
- (d) Intentionally being alone with a student on campus or away from the school.
- (e) Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments.
- (f) Sexual jokes or jokes/comments with sexual innuendos.
- (g) Seeking emotional involvement with a student for your benefit.
- (h) Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented.
- (i) Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student in an attempt to gain their support and understanding.
- (j) Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.

F. Unacceptable Behaviors without Parent and Supervisor Permission

The following behavior should only be exercised when a staff member has parent and supervisor permission:

- (a) Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities.
- (b) Being alone in a room with a student at the school with the door closed.
- (c) Allowing students in your home.
- (d) Sending emails, text messages, or letters or posting messages or replies on social networking websites to students if the content is not about school activities.

G. Cautionary Behaviors

Staff members should only engage in the following behavior when a reasonable and prudent person, acting as an educator, is prevented from using a better practice or behavior. Staff members should inform their supervisor of the circumstance and occurrence prior to, or immediately after, the occurrence.

- (a) Being alone with a student.
- (b) Remarks about the physical attributes or development of anyone.
- (c) Excessive attention toward a particular student.
- (d) Sending emails, text messages, or letters or posting messages or replies on social networking websites to students if the content is not about school activities.

H. Acceptable and Recommended Behaviors

- (a) Getting a parent's written consent for any after-school activity.
- (b) Obtaining formal approval to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
- (c) Emails, text, phone and instant messages to students must be very professional and pertaining to school activities or classes.
- (d) Keeping the door open when alone with a student.
- (e) Keeping reasonable space between you and your students.
- (f) Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries.
- (g) Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student.
- (h) Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief.
- (i) Asking for advice from fellow staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries.
- (j) Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with the student.
- (k) Informing your supervisor about situations that have the potential to become more severe.
- (l) Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later.
- (m) Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students or co-workers.

- (n) Giving students praise and recognition without touching them.
- (o) Pats on the back, high fives and handshakes are acceptable.
- (p) Keeping your professional conduct a high priority.
- (q) Asking yourself if your actions are worth your job and career.