

Empower Generations

EMPLOYEE-STUDENT RELATIONS POLICY

Board Approved: June 18, 2020

BOUNDARIES DEFINED

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

UNACCEPTABLE AND ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

Some activities may seem innocent from an employee’s perspective, but some of these can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parental point of view. The purpose of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between employees and students but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, misconduct.

Employees must understand their own responsibilities 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 any required disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is critical that all employees study this policy thoroughly and apply its spirit and intent in their daily activities. Although sincere, professional interaction with students fosters the charter mission of academic excellence, employee-student interaction has Boundaries regarding the activities, locations, and intentions.

The following is an illustrative list of unacceptable behavior, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal and intimate nature
- Kissing of ANY kind
- Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation
- Intentionally being alone with a student away from iLEAD
- Making, or participating in, sexually inappropriate comments
- Sexual jokes or jokes/comments with sexual double entendre
- Seeking emotional involvement (which can include intimate attachment) with a student beyond the normative care and concern required of an educator
- Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented
- Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student in an attempt to gain their support and understanding
- Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior
- Giving students a ride to/from iLEAD or school activities without parental permission
- Being alone in a room with a student at iLEAD with the door closed
- Allowing students in your home without signed parent permission for a preplanned and precommunicated educational activity that must include the presence of another educator, parent, or other responsible adult
- Remarks about the physical attributes or physiological development of anyone
- Excessive attention toward a particular student
- Sending e-mails, text messages, instant messages, social media messages, or letters to students if the content is not about iLEAD activities and not in accordance with applicable iLEAD policies or in violation of iLEAD’s Social Media Policy
- Being “friends” with a student on any personal or non- iLEAD social media website

- Communicating with students or parents/guardians in violation of iLEAD's Social Media Policy
- Engaging in inappropriate and/or unprofessional communications with students on iLEAD's social media
- Using profanity with or to a student
- Involving students in non-educational or non-school related issues, including, but not limited to, the employee's employment issues

The following is an illustrative list of acceptable and recommended behavior, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Obtaining parents' written consent for any after- school activity on or off campus (exclusive of tutorials)
- Obtaining formal approval (iLEAD and parental) to take students off iLEAD's property for activities such as field trips or competitions
- E-mails, text messages, phone conversations, and other communications to and with students must be professional and pertain to iLEAD activities or classes, and communication should be initiated via iLEAD-based technology and equipment
- Keeping the door open when alone with a student
- Keeping reasonable space between you and students
- Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries
- Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student
- Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief
- Asking for advice from senior staff or administrators (such as Employee Services) if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to Boundaries
- Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with a student
- Informing Employee Services about situations that have the potential to become more severe
- Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later
- Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students and/or coworkers
- Asking another employee to be present if you will be alone with any student who may have severe social or emotional challenges
- Asking another employee to be present, or within close supervisory distance, when you must be alone with a student after regular school hours

- Giving students praise and recognition without touching them in questionable areas; giving appropriate pats on the back, high five's, and handshakes
- Keeping your professional conduct a high priority during all moments of student contact
- Asking yourself if any of your actions that go contrary to these provisions are worth sacrificing your job, your career, and the reputation of iLEAD

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

When any employee, parent, or student becomes aware of an employee having crossed the Boundaries specified in this policy, he or she must promptly report the suspicion to Employee Services. All reports shall be kept as confidential as possible. Prompt reporting is essential to protect students, the suspected employee, any witnesses, and iLEAD as a whole. Employees must also report to the Administration any awareness of, or concern about, student behavior that crosses Boundaries or any situation in which a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse.

INVESTIGATING

Employee Services will promptly investigate any allegation of a violation of the Employee-Student Relations Policy, using such support staff or outside assistance as he or she deems necessary and appropriate under the circumstances, unless the allegation also constitutes a reportable allegation under California Penal Code section 11166. In the event the allegation also constitutes such a reportable allegation, Employee Services shall comply with the legal requirements of immediately reporting the allegation to a child protective agency and shall follow up such report with a written report within thirty-six (36) hours.

If the allegation is only a violation of the Employee-Student Relations Policy, but not a violation of California Penal Code section 11166, Employee Services or other appropriate administrator shall conduct an investigation as set forth above. Throughout this fact-finding process, the investigating administrator, and all others privy to the investigation, will protect the privacy interests of any affected student(s) and/or employee(s), including any potential witnesses, to the fullest extent possible.

VIOLATIONS

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. When appropriate, violations of this policy may also be reported to authorities for potential legal action.
