

## **Staff Conduct**

### **Policy**

The Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (MECDHH/GBSD) expects all staff members to maintain the highest professional moral and ethical standards in their conduct with students and their families. This expectation also extends to volunteers. Relationships between staff and students must be solely professional in nature. The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect, trust and an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in an educational setting.

### **Procedures**

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

- Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the school's policy on Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students; or child abuse/exploitation;
- Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal staff-student relationship;
- Encouraging students to confide their personal problems and/or relationships (outside the bounds of the staff member of the staff member's job responsibilities);
- Confiding in a student about your personal, family and/or work issues;
- Inviting or allowing students to visit your home;
- Visiting a student's home, unless on official school business;
- Maintaining personal contact with a student and their families outside of school by telephone, email or letters (beyond homework or other legitimate school business), social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter), video phone;
- Exchanging personal gifts (beyond the customary staff-student gifts);
- Socializing or spending time with students outside of school-sponsored events; and/or
- Sexual banter, allusions, or innuendo with students.

Staff members and volunteers are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members/volunteers are encouraged to discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor

whenever they are unsure as to whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of the policy.

#### Reporting Violations

Students and/or their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the Principal or Director of Student Services if they believe a teacher or other staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates the policy. Staff members are required to promptly notify the appropriate building administrator or Executive Director if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

#### Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of the policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Human Services and/or law enforcement in accordance with the school's policy on Abuse/Neglect.

When an employee terminates employment at MECDHH/GBSD, all visiting at the school between the former employee and students attending MECDHH/GBSD must be approved by the student's parent/guardian as well as the Director of Student Services, a Principal and/or the Executive Director.

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

**Reference:** ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students; JLF Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

**Adopted: August 16, 2001**

**Amended and Adopted: April 1, 2010**

**Edited for administrator title: January 2014**