MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL STAFF/STUDENT BOUNDARIES

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

The Board of Directors of Tacoma School District expects all staff members to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their interaction with all students. Staff members are required to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, through consistently and fairly applied discipline and well-established and maintained professional boundaries. Staff members are expected to set examples for students by demonstrating appropriate conduct and behavior.

Interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust, an understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and students inside and outside of the educational setting, and consistency with the educational mission of the District. Staff members must engage in behavior that meets the duty of care that school personnel have for students, and must interact with students as adults in a professional manner at all times.

Staff members will not intrude on a student’s physical and emotional boundaries unless and only to the extent the intrusion is necessary to serve an educational and a physical, mental or emotional health purpose. An educational purpose is one that relates to the staff member’s specific duties as assigned by the District. Additionally, staff members are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their own conduct and the conduct of other staff when interacting with students. Staff members will discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they suspect or are unsure whether their conduct or the conduct of others is inappropriate or constitutes a violation of this policy. If the staff member is concerned about the conduct of their building administrator or supervisor, the staff member shall report his or her concerns to the District’s Human Resources Department. All employees will continue to meet their obligations to report to law enforcement or Child Protective Services in a timely manner when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.

The Board supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, District employees are prohibited from using technology for inappropriate communication or socializing with students and from engaging in any conduct that violates the law, District policies or other generally recognized professional standards of conduct.

Employees whose conduct violates this policy may face discipline up to and including termination, consistent with the District’s policies, and collective bargaining agreements, as applicable.

The Superintendent or designee will develop staff protocols for reporting and investigating allegations and develop procedures and training to accompany this policy.

Legal References: RCW 9A.44  
RCW 9A.88  
RCW 28A.400  
RCW 28A.405.470  
Sexual offenses  
Indecent exposure  
Crimes against children  
Crimes against children - Mandatory termination of certificated employees - Appeal - Recovery of salary or compensation by district.
RCW 28A.405.475  Termination of certificated employee based on guilty plea or conviction of certain felonies - Notice to superintendent of public instruction - Record of notices.

RCW 28A.410.090  Revocation or suspension of certificate or permit to teach - Criminal basis - Complaints - Investigation - Process.

RCW 28A.410.095  Violation or noncompliance - Investigatory powers of superintendent of public instruction - Requirements for investigation of alleged sexual misconduct towards a child - Court orders - Contempt - Written findings required.

WAC 181-87  Professional Certification - Acts of Unprofessional Conduct

WAC 181-88  Sexual Misconduct, Verbal and Physical Abuse - Mandatory Disclosure - Prohibited Agreements

Adoption Date: June 24, 2010
Amended: April 28, 2011, October 8, 2015