

Staff Conduct (And Responsibilities)

All staff members have a responsibility to make themselves familiar with and abide by federal and state laws as these affect their work, and the policies and regulations of the district.

As representatives of the district and role models for students, all staff must demonstrate and uphold high professional, ethical, and moral standards. Staff members must conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the educational mission of the district and must maintain professional boundaries with students at all times in accordance with this policy's accompanying regulation. Interactions between staff members must be based on mutual respect and any disputes will be resolved in a professional manner.

Rules of conduct

Each staff member must observe rules of conduct established in law which specify that a school employee must not:

1. Disclose or use confidential information acquired in the course of employment to further substantially the employee's personal financial interests.
2. Accept a gift of substantial value or substantial economic benefit tantamount to a gift of substantial value which would tend to improperly influence a reasonable person in the position to depart from the faithful and impartial discharge of the staff member's duties, or which the staff member knows or should know is primarily for the purpose of a reward for action taken.
3. Engage in a substantial financial transaction for private business purposes with a person whom the staff member supervises.
4. Perform an action which directly and substantially confers an economic benefit tantamount to a gift of substantial value on a business or other undertaking in which the staff member has a substantial financial interest or is engaged as counsel, consultant, representative, or agent.

All staff members are expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern.

It is not considered a breach of conduct for a staff member to:

1. Use school facilities and equipment to communicate or correspond with constituents, family members, or business associates on an occasional basis.
2. Accept or receive a benefit as an indirect consequence of transacting school district business.

Essential to the success of ongoing school operations and the instructional program are the following specific responsibilities which are required of all personnel:

1. Faithfulness and promptness in attendance at work.
2. Support and enforcement of policies of the Board and regulations of the school administration in regard to students.
3. Diligence in submitting required reports promptly at the times specified.
4. Care and protection of school property.
5. Concern and attention toward the safety and welfare of students.

Child abuse

All district employees who have reasonable cause to know or suspect that any child is subjected to abuse or to conditions that might result in abuse or neglect must immediately upon receiving such information report such fact in accordance with Board policy and state law.

The superintendent is authorized to conduct an internal investigation or to take any other necessary steps if information is received from a county department of social services or a law enforcement agency that a suspected child abuse perpetrator is a school district employee. Such information must remain confidential except that the superintendent must notify the Colorado Department of Education of the child abuse investigation.

Possession of deadly weapons

The Board's policy regarding public possession of deadly weapons on school property or in school buildings applies to district employees. However, the restrictions do not apply to employees who are required to carry or use deadly weapons in order to perform their necessary duties and functions.

Felony/misdemeanor convictions

If, subsequent to beginning employment with the district, the district has good cause to believe that any staff member has been convicted of, pled *nolo contendere* to, or received a deferred or suspended sentence for any felony or misdemeanor other than a misdemeanor traffic offense or infraction, the district must make inquiries to the Department of Education for purposes of screening the employee.

In addition, the district must require the employee to submit a complete set of fingerprints taken by a qualified law enforcement agency, an authorized district or BOCES employee, or any third party approved by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation. Fingerprints must be submitted within 20 days after receipt of written notification. The fingerprints must be forwarded to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation for the purpose of conducting a state and national fingerprint-based criminal history record check utilizing the records of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. When the results of the fingerprint-based criminal history record check reveal a record of arrest without a disposition, the district must require the employee to submit to a name-based criminal history record check. Criminal history record information must be used

solely for the purpose requested and cannot be disseminated outside the receiving departments, related agencies, or other authorized entities.

Disciplinary action, which could include dismissal from employment, may be taken against personnel if the results of fingerprint processing and/or name-based criminal history record check provide relevant information. Non-licensed employees must be terminated if the results of the fingerprint-based or name-based criminal history record check disclose a conviction for certain felonies, as provided in law.

Employees must not be charged fees for processing fingerprints under these circumstances.

Unlawful behavior involving children

The district may make an inquiry with the Department of Education concerning whether any current employee of the school district has been convicted of, pled *nolo contendere* to, or received a deferred or suspended sentence or deferred prosecution for a felony or misdemeanor crime involving unlawful sexual behavior, an allegation of a sexual act involving a student who is eighteen years of age or older, regardless of whether the student consented to the sexual act, or unlawful behavior involving children. Disciplinary action, including termination, may be taken if the inquiry discloses information relevant to the employee's fitness for employment.

Notification concerning arrest

District employees must notify the district when they are arrested for specific criminal offenses, in accordance with their policy's accompanying regulation.

The district must notify students' parents/guardians when district employees are charged with specific criminal offenses, as required by state law and in accordance with applicable Board policy.

Personnel addressing health care treatment for behavior issues

School personnel are prohibited under state law from recommending or requiring the use of psychotropic drugs for students. They are also prohibited from testing or requiring testing for a student's behavior without giving notice to the parent/guardian describing the recommended testing and how any test results will be used and obtaining prior written permission from the student or from the student's parent/guardian. See the policy concerning survey, assessment, analysis or evaluation of students. School personnel are encouraged to discuss concerns about a student's behavior with the parent/guardian and such discussions may include a suggestion that the parent/guardian speak with an appropriate health care professional regarding any behavior concerns.

Adopted by the superintendent: January 22, 2014

Revised by the superintendent: July 19, 2017

Revised and recoded by the superintendent: July 17, 2019

Revised: February 26, 2020, November 11, 2020

Revised: October 27, 2021

LEGAL REFS.: 28 C.F.R. 50.12 (b) (*notification requirements regarding fingerprints*)

C.R.S. 18-12-105.5 (unlawful carrying/possession of weapons on school grounds)
C.R.S. 18-12-214 (3)(b) (school security officers may carry concealed handgun pursuant to valid permit)
C.R.S. 19-3-308 (5.7) (child abuse reporting)
C.R.S. 22-1-130 (parent notification of employee criminal charges)
C.R.S. 22-2-119.3 (6)(d) (name-based criminal history record check – definition)
C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(ee) (duty to adopt policy prohibiting personnel from recommending certain drugs for students or ordering behavior tests without parent permission)
C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(pp) (annual employee notification requirement regarding federal student loan repayment programs and student loan forgiveness programs)
C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (8) (policy requiring inquiries upon good cause to department of education for purpose of ongoing screening of employees)
C.R.S. 22-32-109.7 (duty to make inquiries prior to hiring)
C.R.S. 22-32-109.8 (non-licensed personnel – submittal of fingerprints and name-based criminal history check)
C.R.S. 22-32-109.8 (6)(a) (requirement to terminate non-licensed employees for certain felony offenses)
C.R.S. 22-32-109.9 (licensed personnel – submittal of fingerprints and name-based criminal history record check)
C.R.S. 22-32-110 (1)(k) (power to adopt conduct rules)
C.R.S. 24-18-104 (government employee rules of conduct)
C.R.S. 24-18-109 (local government employee rules of conduct)
C.R.S. 24-18-110 (voluntary disclosure)

CROSS REFS.:

Board policy:

EL-12, Staff Treatment

Administrative policies:

GBDA, Board-Staff Meet and Confer

JLC, Student Health Services and Records

JLDAC, Screening/Testing of Students (And Treatment of Mental Disorders)

JLF, Reporting Child Abuse/Child Protection

KFA, Public Conduct on District Property

NOTE 1: State law defines "economic benefit tantamount to a gift of substantial value" to include: 1. A loan at a rate of interest substantially lower than the prevailing commercial rate; 2. Compensation received for private services rendered at a rate substantially exceeding the fair market value; and 3. Goods or services for the district employee's personal benefit offered by a person who is at the same time providing goods or services to the district under a contract or other means by which the person receives payment or other compensation from the district. C.R.S. 24-18-104 (2). However, state law permits a district employee to receive such goods or services if the "totality of the circumstances" indicates the transaction is legitimate, the terms are fair to both parties, the transaction is supported by full and adequate consideration, and the employee does not receive any substantial benefit resulting from the employee's status that is unavailable to members of the public generally. C.R.S. 24-18-104 (2)(b).

NOTE 2: State law lists the type of items that are not considered “gifts of substantial value or substantial economic benefit tantamount to a gift of substantial value” and are therefore permissible for a district employee to receive. See, C.R.S. 24-18-104 (3). Such items include campaign contributions or contributions in kind that are reported in accordance with the Fair Campaign Practices Act; an unsolicited item of trivial value (i.e. currently less than \$65), “such as a pen, calendar, plant, book, notepad or similar item;” and an unsolicited token or award of appreciation in the form of a plaque, trophy, desk item, wall memento or similar item. Id.; see also, Colo. Const. Art. XXIX, Section 3.

NOTE 3: The amount of the gift limit (\$65) is identical to the gift limit under section 3 of article XXIX of the state constitution. This amount is adjusted for inflation contemporaneously with any adjustment to the constitutional gift limit. C.R.S. 24-6-203 (8). The state constitution requires an adjustment for inflation every four years. The next adjustment must occur in the first quarter of 2023. Colo. Const. Art. XXIX, Section 3 (6).

NOTE 4: Federal law requires school districts to notify employees fingerprinted pursuant to this policy that the fingerprints will be used to check the criminal history records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Districts must also notify fingerprinted employees about the opportunity to challenge the accuracy of the information contained in the FBI identification record and the procedure to obtain a change, correction or update of an FBI identification record. 28 C.F.R. 50.12(b). Districts must retain documentation that this notification was provided.

NOTE 5: State law requires school districts to annually distribute to employees “informational materials related to federal student loan repayment and student loan forgiveness programs, including updated materials received from the department of education.” C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(pp). Distribution to employees may be made via email “or as part of a mailing or regular communication to employees” Id.

Staff Conduct (And Responsibilities)

Professional boundaries with students

In a professional staff/student relationship, staff members maintain boundaries with students that are consistent with their professional code of conduct and obligations. All district employees are expected to observe and maintain proper professional boundaries, in accordance with this regulation and accompanying policy.

The following list provides examples of staff conduct that, in the absence of evidence of a legitimate educational purpose or other reason deemed valid by the district, may be regarded as evidence that a staff member has violated professional boundaries with a student:

- any type of inappropriate physical contact with a student or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under Board policy
- furnishing alcohol, drugs or tobacco to a student or being present when any student is consuming these substances
- repeating sexual or inappropriate romantic rumors
- accepting massages, or offering or giving massages other than in the course of injury care administered by the appropriate athletic trainer, coach or health care provider
- singling out a particular student or students for personal attention or friendship beyond the ordinary professional staff-student relationship
- being alone with a student behind closed doors
- initiating or extending contact with a student beyond the school day or outside of class times for the staff member's personal purposes
- sending or accompanying a student on personal errands
- inviting a student to a staff member's home without appropriate chaperones
- going to a student's home when the student's parent/guardian or an appropriate chaperone is not present
- giving a student a ride in a vehicle without prior notification to and approval from both the student's parent/guardian and the building principal, except in an emergency under appropriate circumstances
- giving gifts or money to the student
- any other action or activity similar in nature to those listed above

Prohibited communications in any format (email, text messaging, written communications, in person, etc.) by a staff member with a student includes, but is not limited to the following:

- any communications without a legitimate educational reason
- flirting, propositions or sexual remarks
- sexual slurs, leering, sexual or derogatory comments
- inappropriate comments about a student's body
- sexual jokes, notes, stories, drawings, gestures or pictures
- displaying or transmitting sexual pictures, objects or depictions
- disclosing personal, sexual, romantic, marital or employment issues or other private matters

- other communications or activities similar in nature to those listed above

Reporting violations and disciplinary action

Staff members shall promptly notify the principal or superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this regulation. Depending on the specific circumstances of the allegations or suspicions, staff members may have a mandatory duty under state law to report the violation(s) as child abuse, in accordance with applicable Board policy.

Students and their parents/guardians should notify the principal or superintendent if they believe a teacher or other staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates this regulation.

In determining whether a violation of professional boundaries has occurred, the district shall consider the totality of the circumstances, including the nature and extent of the conduct involved, the job description and duties of the employee, the employee's intent or purpose in engaging in the conduct, and whether the conduct caused harm to the student or adversely affected the education of students.

Persons reporting in good faith regarding alleged violations or suspected violations of this regulation shall not be subjected to retaliation in any form.

Approved by the superintendent: July 19, 2017

Revised and recoded by the superintendent: July 17, 2019