

Staff/Student Interaction Policy

Envision Education recognizes its responsibility to make and enforce all rules and regulations governing student and employee behavior to bring about the safest and most learning-conducive environment possible. This policy is intended to guide all staff in conducting themselves in a way that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of school employees and to specify the boundaries between students and staff. Although this policy gives specific, clear direction, it is each staff member's obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents, students, colleagues, or school leaders. The guidelines set forth in this policy are designed to provide protections for students and staff.

Background Screening

All Envision Education employees and volunteers must clear background screening prior to working with students. Screening is conducted through the following actions:

- **Employment Application** - Employees submit a resume that includes basic information, employment experience, and references.
- **Interview** - Employees participate in an interview process with multiple people to determine fit and qualifications.
- **Reference Check** - Employees must include professional references as part of the application process. At least two of the references provided are checked in the screening process and one must be a former supervisor.
- **Criminal Background Check** - Employees participate in a state (DOJ) and federal (FBI) criminal background check, including a check of the National Sex Offender Registry.

Training

Envision Education provides training to employees and volunteers on how to work with youth; acceptable behaviors and interactions with youth; abuse identification and mandatory reporting requirements; and appropriate discipline and behavioral interventions. Trainings occur prior to employment and on an ongoing basis.

Prevention

An important element of prevention is providing guidance for acceptable and unacceptable staff and student behavior. 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 guidelines of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors 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.

Authentic relationships with students contribute to a rich learning environment. It is incumbent on teachers/staff members to have clear professional boundaries in the

student-staff relationship.

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 and in some cases, it is a crime.

Allegations or suspicions of policy violations will be immediately investigated. The staff member(s) involved will be placed on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. Depending on the circumstances, Envision Education may be obligated to contact law enforcement and child protective services.

- **Examples of policy violations (not inclusive):**

- 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. (Pats on the back, high fives and handshakes are acceptable)
- Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments.
- Sexual jokes.
- Seeking emotional involvement with a student.
- Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented.
- Not stopping students from telling sexually oriented stories or content.
- Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student.
- Interacting with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.
- Remarks about a student’s physical attributes or development.
- Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities, unless as an authorized field trip chaperone.
- Being alone in a room with a student at school with the door closed.
- Intentionally being alone with a student away from the school.
- Allowing students in your home.
- Sending emails, text messages or letters to students if the content is not about school activities.

- **Required protocols**

- Getting parents’ or guardians’ written consent for any after-school activity.
- Obtaining formal approval to take students off school property for activities such as field trips, athletics, or competitions.
- Keeping emails, text, phone and instant messages to students very professional and pertaining to school activities or classes.
- Keeping the door open when alone with a student unless there is a situation that requires confidentiality.
- 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.
- Asking for advice from fellow staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries.
- Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with the student.
- Notifying your supervisor if a student makes sexual comments around or about you or makes a sexual advance.
- Making detailed notes about any incident that is unusual or uncomfortable.
- Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students or

coworkers.

- **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:
 - Examples of **PERMITTED** actions (NOT corporal punishment)
 - Stopping a student from fighting with another student;
 - Preventing a pupil from committing an act of vandalism;
 - Defending yourself from physical injury or assault by a student;
 - Forcing a pupil to give up a weapon or dangerous object;
 - 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;
 - Engaging in group calisthenics, team drills, or other physical education or voluntary recreational activities.
 - Examples of **PROHIBITED** actions (corporal punishment)
 - Hitting, shoving, pushing, or physically restraining a student as a means of control;
 - Making unruly students do push-ups, run laps, or perform other physical acts that cause pain or discomfort as a form of punishment;
 - Paddling, swatting, slapping, grabbing, pinching, kicking, or otherwise causing physical pain.

Reporting

Staff and volunteers understand the importance of reporting inappropriate behavior, even low-level concerns, and have clear structures for reporting this information. Identification and reporting structures are covered in regular training. School Leaders will report allegations and concerns and partner with Envision Education's Human Resources Department.

Investigation

Concerns and reports of sexual misconduct are investigated with fidelity and reported to appropriate authorities, including the police when applicable. Envision Education complies with requirements for mandatory reporting of abuse. During an investigation:

- The accused person is removed from any interaction with the accuser
- Procedures are in place to protect those during the investigation process and all are treated with dignity

Response

Envision Education responds to all allegations and incidents seriously and conducts an analysis of all allegations and occurrences to determine what changes are needed to protect students and prevent further incidents.