

## Staff Code of Conduct

This policy is adopted in conformance with [Utah Administrative Rule R277-517](#), which requires local educational entities to adopt a code of conduct applicable to staff.

### Definitions—

1. Abuse
  - a. “Physical abuse” means abuse that results in physical injury or damage.
  - b. “Sexual abuse” has the same meaning as defined in Utah Code § 78A-6-105(48).
  - c. “Verbal abuse” means repeatedly communicating in an objectively demeaning or disparaging manner which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive learning environment.
  - d. “Mental abuse” means a pattern of sustained and repetitive acts or inappropriate statements that cause fear, lower self-esteem, or manipulate the person to control behavior. Examples of actions or statements that could be part of such a pattern include intimidation, threatening harm, destruction of property, insults or putdowns, arbitrary and unpredictable inconsistency, and denial that prior abusive incidents occurred. (Appropriate statements or actions taken in imposing discipline for misconduct do not constitute mental abuse.)  
[Utah Code § 78A-6-105\(40\), \(48\) \(2018\)](#)  
[Utah Admin. Rules R277-515-4\(2\)\(b\)\(i\) \(December 1, 2017\)](#)
2. “Boundary violation.” A boundary violation occurs when a staff member crosses verbal, physical, emotional, or social lines that must be maintained to ensure structure, security, and predictability in an educational environment. Depending on the circumstances, the following may constitute a boundary violation:
  - a. Isolated, one-on-one interactions with students out of the line of sight of others;
  - b. Meeting with a student or students in rooms with covered or blocked windows;
  - c. Telling risqué jokes to or in the presence of a student;
  - d. Employing favoritism to a student;
  - e. Giving a gift to an individual student;
  - f. Staff-initiated frontal hugging or other uninvited touching;
  - g. Photographing an individual student for a non-educational purpose or use;

- h. Engaging in inappropriate or unprofessional conduct outside of educational program activities;
- i. Exchanging personal email or phone numbers with a student for a non-educational purpose or use;
- j. Interacting privately with a student through social media, computer, or handheld devices; and
- k. Discussing the staff member's personal life or personal issues with a student.

It is NOT a boundary violation to:

- a. Offer praise, encouragement, or acknowledgement;
- b. Offer rewards available to all who achieve;
- c. Ask permission to touch for necessary purposes;
- d. Give a pat on the back or a shoulder;
- e. Give a side hug;
- f. Give a handshake or "high five";
- g. Offer warmth and kindness;
- h. Use public social media alerts to groups of students and parents; or
- i. Engage in contact permitted by an IEP or 504 plan.

It is not a boundary violation when a student acts or speaks in inappropriately familiar ways with a staff member without having been prompted to do so by the staff member, but such incidents must be promptly documented and reported to the staff member's supervisor or the building principal and the student should be given guidance on proper student-staff relationships as directed by the supervisor or principal.

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-515-2\(1\) \(December 1, 2017\)](#)

- 3. "Bullying" means the same as that is defined by Policy FHA and Policy FGAD.
- 4. "Cyber-bullying" means the same as that is defined by Policy FHA and Policy FGAD.
- 5. "Neglect" has the same meaning as defined in Utah Code § 78A-6-105(36).
  - a. The term "parent" means the natural or adoptive or step or foster parent of a child or legal guardian who acts in the place of a parent.

[Utah Code § 78A-6-105\(36\) \(2018\)](#)

- 6. "Staff" means an employee or any contractor or volunteer with unsupervised access to students.

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-517-2\(2\) \(January 10, 2017\)](#)

## **Professional Conduct—**

District staff are expected to comply with all District policies and to adhere to all requirements of the law. District staff are further expected to act professionally. This includes communicating in a civil manner and not promoting personal opinions, issues, or political positions as part of the instructional process in a manner inconsistent with law. It further includes integrity and honesty in relationships with others and conducting any financial business and accounting for funds honestly and with integrity. District staff are expected to comply with appropriate dress and grooming standards as established by District policy, supervisor directives, and generally accepted professional standards. District employees are required to report arrests and convictions as provided for in Policy DACA.

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-515-3, -4, -5, and -6 \(December 1, 2017\)](#)

District staff are prohibited from being under the influence of, using, possessing, or distributing any alcoholic beverage, tobacco product (including electronic cigarettes), or controlled substance at school or at a school-related activity where the staff member is functioning as such, as outlined in Policy DAG. District staff are further expected to support District efforts to reduce inappropriate drug use and alcohol or tobacco use among students, including by reporting student actions as provided by Policy DDB.

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-515-3\(4\)\(h\), \(i\) \(December 1, 2017\)](#)

District staff are prohibited from knowingly viewing or accessing pornographic or indecent material in any form (print, electronic, or otherwise) while on school premises or at a school-related activity or by using District devices, internet access, or other resources. District staff may not knowingly use, view, create, distribute, or store pornographic or indecent material involving children at any time.

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-495-4\(1\)\(c\) \(April 8, 2019\)](#)

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-515-4\(2\)\(b\)\(vii\) to \(ix\) \(December 1, 2017\)](#)

[Utah Code § 76-10-1235 \(2007\)](#)

## **Professional and Ethical Relationships with Students—**

District staff are to comport themselves in a way that contributes to maintaining and fostering a positive, effective, non-disruptive and safe learning environment for students. This includes maintaining professional and appropriate demeanor and relationships with students, both during and outside of school hours and on and off campus. This also includes respecting appropriate intrapersonal boundaries in interacting with students and avoiding behavior that could reasonably lead to the appearance of impropriety.

Staff are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct towards students:

1. Abuse (physical, sexual, verbal, or mental, as defined above);
2. Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), or hazing;

3. Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion (or lack of religious affiliation or belief), or disability;
4. Boundary violations;
- 4.5. Sharing any sexually explicit or lewd communication, image, or photograph;
- 5.6. Allowing students in their homes for a school-related social activity without prior written permission of the principal;
- 6.7. Dating or any type of romantic or sexual relationship or conduct;
- 7.8. Requests for sexual activity or sexually suggestive comments; or
- 8.9. Touching a student in a way that makes a reasonably objective student feel uncomfortable.

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-517-3\(2\) \(January 10, 2017\)](#)

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-515-2\(1\) \(December 1, 2017\)](#)

[Utah Code § 63G-7-301\(3\)\(a\)\(i\), \(b\) \(2019\)](#)

The foregoing prohibitions apply to staff interaction with any student presently enrolled in the District and to staff interaction with any student who was enrolled in the District within the time period two (2) years before the conduct in question.

*Flaskamp v. Dearborn Public Schools, 385 F.3d 935, 944 (6<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2004).*

The District recognizes that in circumstances where a staff member and a student have a relationship which is independent of and does not arise out of the school context, interactions which would be a boundary violation in the absence of that independent relationship may not constitute a boundary violation. (Examples of such independent relationships include where the staff member and student are family members or otherwise closely related or where the staff member and student are both affiliated with a non-school organization and the interaction relates to or arises out of that relationship.) The other prohibitions listed above apply regardless of the existence of an independent, non-school relationship.

Violation of any of the prohibitions of this policy is grounds for employee disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and for action up to and including termination of the District's relationship with a contractor or volunteer.

### **Reporting Requirements—**

Staff members are required to promptly report any suspected incidents of abuse (physical, verbal, sexual, or mental) or neglect, including suspected incidents of child abuse as provided in Policy DDA. Staff members are also required to report incidents of student prohibited acts under Policy DDB, which includes hazing and demeaning or assaultive behavior). Staff members shall also report incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment.

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-517-3\(2\)\(j\)\(i\) \(January 10, 2017\)](#)

Staff members are also required to report any instance of violation of this Code of Conduct policy, including but not limited to instances of sexual harassment as provided by Policy DKB. If a staff member becomes aware that a student has initiated any interaction with a staff member which would be improper or inappropriately familiar, the staff member must promptly document and report that incident.

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-517-3\(4\)\(a\) \(January 10, 2017\)](#)

Staff members should report any instances where the staff member knows or has reason to believe that a staff member holding a Utah educator or administrative license has violated the Utah Educator Standards.

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-517-3\(4\)\(b\) \(January 10, 2017\)](#)

### **Reporting Procedures—**

Reports required under this Code of Conduct shall be made as follows: Reports regarding child abuse or neglect shall be made according to Policy DDA. Reports regarding sexual harassment shall be made according to Policy DKB. Reports of student prohibited conduct shall be made according to Policy DDB. Other reports required by this Code of Conduct shall be made to the staff member's immediate supervisor or the building principal. However, if the person who would receive the report is the person whose conduct is in question, the report will be made instead to that person's supervisor.

### **Training—**

Each staff member must, at least every other year, read and sign Policy DDA (regarding reporting of suspected child abuse) and any other policies relating to identifying or documenting child abuse.

[Utah Admin. Rule R277-517-3\(2\)\(j\)\(ii\) \(January 10, 2017\)](#)

Each staff member must, at the time of initial employment and at least every other year thereafter, be trained on the requirements of this Policy DAI and must at the time of each training sign a statement acknowledging that the staff member has read and understands this policy.

[Utah Code § 63G-7-301\(3\)\(b\) \(2019\)](#)

Each staff member who is either an employee or a contractor must, at least every other year, attend sexual abuse and human trafficking prevention training as provided for under Policy DDAA.

[Utah Admin. Rule R277-517-3\(2\)\(j\)\(iii\) \(January 10, 2017\)](#)

[Utah Code § 53G-9-207 \(2019\)](#)

Each staff member who holds a Utah educator or administrative license shall become and remain familiar with the professional standards set forth in [Utah Administrative Rule R277-515](#).

[Utah Admin. Rule R277-515-3\(2\) \(December 1, 2017\)](#)

**Public Notice of Code of Conduct—**

This policy shall be posted on the District's web site.

[Utah Admin. Rule R277-517-3\(3\) \(January 10, 2017\)](#)