

Faith's Law

School districts, charter schools, and non-public schools are obligated to have a Professional Expectations of Conduct for staff in place, which must include a definition of sexual misconduct, identify expectations for employees regarding maintaining professional relationships with students, reference required employee training related to child abuse and educator ethics, and provide that a violation would result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. The Professional Code of Conduct is to be posted on the district's website and included in any staff, student, or parent handbook provided by the district.

Professional Expectations of Conduct

All District employees are expected to maintain high professional standards in their school relationships, to demonstrate integrity and honesty, to be considerate and cooperative, and to maintain appropriate relationships with students, parents/guardians, employees, and others. The information below is provided in compliance with the Illinois School Code provisions enacted under Public Act 102-0676, referred to as Faith's Law. This document describes the expectations for employees regarding maintaining a professional relationship with students, including but not limited to, expectations for employee-student boundaries, and recognizing the age and developmental level of students served.

- All employees subject to these expectations are expected to adhere to the core principles, values, and responsibilities applicable to Illinois educators outlined in the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators, 23 Ill. Adm. Part 22. The expectations contained in this document are in addition to all applicable federal and state law and regulations and applicable District policies and procedures.
- All employees are explicitly prohibited from engaging in grooming behaviors or sexual misconduct with students. Sexual misconduct is any act, including, but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, by an employee of the District with direct contact with a student that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Such an act includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:
 - A sexual or romantic invitation.
 - Dating or soliciting a date.
 - Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog.
 - Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student.
 - Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.
 - A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student. This definition and standard will apply to employees of the District. However, all other applicable laws, regulations, District policies, procedures, practices, or requirements also continue to apply.

Photos/Videos of Students

- Employees are not permitted to take a photo or video of a student for their personal use. Photos and images of students for District sponsored activities used to further the District are permitted as follows:
 - All photos/video images of students shall be used in accordance with the authorization provided by parents/guardians to the District.
 - A photo or video of a student is a FERPA-protected education record when the photo or video is (a) directly related to a student, and (b) maintained by a school/educational agency or a party acting for the school/educational agency. These images may reveal personally identifiable information about students. A photo or video taken by an employee in their professional capacity is

entitled to protections as any other FERPA-protected student record. These images may not be disclosed without consent or as otherwise permitted by law. These types of images should not be posted to an employee's personal social media accounts for any reason.

- A photo or video would not be considered “directly related to a student” if a student’s image is incidental or captured as part of a background, or a student is shown participating in school activities open to the public without a specific focus on any individual.
- A photo or video of students taken by employees who are also the parent/guardians may not be used for District purposes without appropriate consent.

Transporting Students

- If transportation is provided to students, employees should be accompanied by another employee when transporting the student.
- Employees should not transport students in their privately-owned vehicle unless the employee has obtained prior permission from the building administrator or Deputy Superintendent/designee.
- When transporting a student in a privately-owned vehicle, permission from the parent/guardian should be obtained and documented in writing. If it is not feasible to obtain advance permission or notify a parent/guardian prior to transporting the student (such as an emergency situation in which the parent/guardian cannot be contacted), employees should take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of the student; within a reasonable period of time following the transportation of a student, employees should document what actions were taken and notify both the building administrator and the parent/guardian in a follow-up communication.

Contacting Students Outside the Employee’s Professional Role

- Employees are generally not permitted to meet with a student or contact a student as an employee outside of that individual’s professional role.
- Employees are strictly prohibited from using any form of communication with students (including, but not limited to emails, letters, notes, text messages, phone calls, social media, conversations) that includes any subject matter that would be deemed unprofessional and inappropriate between the employee and a student.
- It is understood that employees live and work in our dynamic communities and may encounter students in the context of the employee’s personal relationships outside of the school. All employees are expected to avoid crossing a line that results in an actual or perceived inappropriate relationship.

Any violations of these expectations or failure to report a violation of these expectations may subject an employee to discipline, up to and including termination of employment with the District. Other individuals, such as student-teachers, volunteers, contractors, and guests of the District may be subject to corrective action or other appropriate consequences in accordance with applicable standards.