



SECTION V: EMPLOYEES

POLICY 5250

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT BY STAFF

The Board of Education counts on staff to adhere at all times to recognized standards of professional conduct. Teachers, administrators, and support employees are role models and must exemplify ethical behavior in their relationships with students, patrons, and other staff members. The board expects staff to be mindful that they are professionals and their conduct, particularly in relation to students, patrons, and other staff, must be consistent with professional standards. Staff members must never engage in conduct which detracts from a safe, positive or appropriate learning environment.

The Board of Education believes that all staff members have a responsibility and professional obligation to be familiar with, and abide by, the laws of Oklahoma, the policies of the Board, and the administrative regulations designed to implement them – as they affect the employee’s job and commitments to students and others.

The OSDE *Standards of Performance and Conduct* set forth standards for the professional conduct of teachers. The Board, like the State Department of Education, requires teachers in the school system to adhere to this code. It expects its administrators also to adhere to requirements for administrators. In addition, the Board approves specific ethical standards that should guide the conduct of all staff members.

Specific Responsibilities

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

1. Support and enforcement of policies of the Board and regulations of the school district administration in regard to students.
2. Concern and attention toward their own and the district’s legal responsibilities for the safety and welfare of students, including the need to assure that students are reasonably supervised within the constraints presented.
3. Avoidance of exploitation of relationships with students, other staff members, or district patrons.
4. Consistently and promptness in attendance at work.
5. Diligence in submitting required reports promptly at the times specified.
6. Care and protection of school district property.

Staff - Student Relationships

Exploitation of staff-student relationships is inconsistent with obligations owed to students. Commercial and business dealings between students and staff members are prohibited. A staff member may not use a teacher/administrator relationship with a student for personal gain. Likewise, staff members may not use student property for personal use or benefit. Staff members who suspect or recognize an inappropriate relationship between a student or staff member or who



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observe inappropriate conduct toward or contact with a student are required to report this in writing to their supervisor, the Superintendent, or other District official.

Exploitation of a Student

Exploitation of a student may result from an improper personal relationship encouraged by a teacher, administrator or support employee. Staff members should be aware that gestures and physical conduct, even though innocent and properly motivated, may be misinterpreted by students or parents. Therefore, teachers, administrators, and support employees must avoid any conduct that might be characterized as evidencing an improper or unprofessional personal attachment toward a student. Sexual or romantic involvement with a student and sexual harassment by any employee, regardless of the student's age or the student's placement in or out of the teacher's class, is prohibited. School officials will seek criminal investigation and prosecution of any employee suspected of engaging in child exploitation.

Standards of Behavior

Staff is expected, in their capacity as role models, to establish an example of acceptable behavior for students. Teachers, administrators and support employees must refrain from the use of vulgar or obscene language and conduct in the presence of students. Similarly, discussion with students of issues personal to the staff member, such as divorce, sexual issues, or similar highly personal subjects, is inappropriate. The use of alcohol by any staff member in the presence of students is prohibited. Likewise, the use of illegal or illicit drugs by employees, in or outside the presence of students, is prohibited and grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Staff members are required to limit communication with students via computers or wireless telecommunication devices to matters concerning the student's education or extra-curricular activities for which the staff member has assigned responsibility. Even when communication is related to school related matters, employees should avoid frequent messaging - particularly when messaging is to a single student. No staff member may establish an internet site for the purpose of communicating with students regarding school matters without the express written permission of the Superintendent or other designated school official.

Employees who engage in job-related communications with students are required to publish to students' class guidelines or activity-based guidelines for communicating with students that the instructor, coach, or sponsor will follow. In instances where a student's communications are inappropriate or personal and outside permissible school boundaries (with the instructor, coach, sponsor or those in similar relationship to the student) the employee has the responsibility to stop the inappropriate communication, report the communication to his or her supervisor and take prompt action to re-direct the student's communication.

Staff members are expected to refrain from comments or statements, even in jest, reflecting adversely on any person or group with reference to race, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, or handicapping conditions. Racial, ethnic, or sexual slurs in the presence of students or during work or work related activities or programs constitute unprofessional conduct.



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Exploitation by Supervisors of Subordinate Employees

The exploitation by supervisors of subordinate employees is improper and prohibited. In particular, any employee who supervises, directs, evaluates or makes any employment recommendations with regard to any other employee (i.e. acts as a supervisor) is prohibited from engaging in any commercial, business, romantic, sexual or other similar type of personal relationship with any employee who is or may be subordinate to the supervisor.

Fiscal Management

It is imperative that sound fiscal management procedures be followed by staff to ensure maximum benefit for each dollar expended. Accordingly, misuse of district property and/or funds constitutes unacceptable behavior. Employees must adhere to accepted procedures of sound accounting, reporting, business and purchasing practices.

Every employee of this school district has the duty to abide by this professional conduct policy in all respects. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action including dismissal or non-renewal from employment, referral to law enforcement authorities for prosecution, or other action appropriate to the nature, gravity, and effect of the relationship on students, other staff members, or school operations.

Source: *Broken Arrow Board of Education policy adoption, July 13, 2009*
Broken Arrow Board of Education policy revised, July 10, 2017.