

Employee Interactions with Students

EC 44050; (BP 4119.24, 4219.24, 4319.24)

Employees, including independent contractors and volunteers, of the Palmdale School District are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards, exhibit professional behavior, follow District policies and regulations, abide by state and federal laws, and exercise good judgment when interacting with students both within and outside the educational setting. Employee conduct should enhance the integrity of the District, advance the goals of the District's educational programs, and contribute to a positive school climate; therefore, employees are not to engage in unlawful or inappropriate interactions with students and must avoid boundary-blurring behaviors that undermine trust in the adult-student relationship and lead to the appearance of impropriety.

In fulfillment of the obligation to ensuring the safety of all students, an employee will not:

1. Engage in harassing or discriminatory behavior towards students, or fail or refuse to intervene when an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying against a student is observed.
2. Use profane, obscene, or abusive language against students.
3. Physically abuse, sexually abuse, neglect, or otherwise willfully harm or injure a student.
4. Initiate inappropriate physical contact.
5. Be alone with a student outside of the view of others.
6. Engage in sexual harassment of a student, including sexual advances, flirtations, requests for sexual favors, inappropriate comments about a student's body or appearance, or other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
7. Address a student in an overly familiar manner, such as by using a term of endearment.
8. Single out a particular student for personal attention and friendship, including giving gifts and/or nicknames to individual students.
9. Enter into or attempt to form a romantic or sexual relationship with any student.
10. Visit a student's home or invite a student to visit the employee's home without parent consent.
11. Send or accompany students on personal errands unrelated to any legitimate educational purpose.
12. Transport a student in a personal vehicle without prior authorization.
13. Maintain personal contact with a student that has no legitimate educational purpose, by phone, letter, electronic communications, or other means, without including the student's parent or the principal. Employees are to use District-issued equipment or technological resources when communicating electronically with students. Employees must not communicate with students through any medium that is designed to eliminate records of the communications.
14. Socialize or spend time with students outside of school-sponsored events, except as participants in community activities.
15. Create or participate in social networking sites for communication with students, other than those created by the District, without the prior written approval of the principal or designee.
16. Invite or accept requests from students, or former students who are minors, to connect on personal social networking sites (e.g., "friending" or "following" on social media), unless the site is dedicated to school business.
17. Intrude on a student's physical or emotional boundaries unless necessary in an emergency or to serve a legitimate purpose related to instruction, counseling, student health, or student or staff safety.
18. Encourage students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships.
19. Disclose personal, family, or other private matters to students or share personal secrets with students.

An employee who observes or has evidence of another employee's inappropriate conduct must immediately report such conduct to the principal or Superintendent or designee. An employee who has knowledge of or suspects child abuse or neglect must file a report pursuant to the District's child abuse reporting procedures as detailed in AR 5141.4 - Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting.

Any reports of employee misconduct will be promptly investigated. Any employee who is found to have engaged in inappropriate conduct in violation of law or Board policy will be subject to disciplinary action and, in the case of a certificated employee, may be subject to a report to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The Superintendent or designee will notify local law enforcement as appropriate. An employee who has knowledge of, but fails to report, inappropriate employee conduct may also be subject to discipline. Immediate intervention will be implemented when necessary to protect student safety or the integrity of the investigation.

The District prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a complaint against an employee or reports an employee's inappropriate conduct. Any employee who retaliates against any such complainant, reporter, or other participant in the District's complaint process will be subject to discipline.