

GBEBB - STAFF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

The Cape Elizabeth School Board expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators and others, to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their conduct with students. For the purposes of this policy, staff members also include school volunteers.

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon:

- Mutual respect and trust;
- An understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in an educational setting; and
- Consistent with the educational mission of the schools.

The Board understands that staff members may interact with and have familiar relationships and friendships with families of students outside of school. This policy is not intended to prohibit such interactions or relationships provided that professional boundaries are maintained at all times.

Staff members are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

Prohibited Conduct

Examples of conduct by staff members that could be considered a violation of this policy include but are not limited to the following:

- Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the Board's policy on Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students;
- Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal teacher-student relationship;
- For non-guidance/counseling staff, encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to be supportive but to refer the student to appropriate guidance/counseling/administrative staff. In either case, staff involvement should be limited to a direct connection to the student's school performance;
- Engaging in sexual banter, allusions, jokes or innuendos with students;
- Asking a student to keep a secret;
- Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters to one or more students;
- Addressing students with terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;
- Permitting individual students to address you by your first name, nickname or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;
- "Friending" students or engaging in any other interactions on social media or through digital applications (outside of any school-approved activity); and
- Communicating with students on non-school matters through phone calls, email, text messages, Messenger or any other digital methods, or by notes, letters, or any other means (unless the student's parent or guardian approves of the activity, e.g. in the context of employment or participation in community activities).

Before engaging in the following activities, staff members will review the activity and consult with their building principal or supervisor, as appropriate:

- Being alone with individual students out of public view or view of others;
- Driving students home or to other locations;
- Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home;
- Visiting a student's home, unless on official school business that is known and agreed to by the parent or guardian;
- Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by telephone or text messaging, computer (such as e-mail, Instant Messenger, social networking sites), or letters (beyond homework or other legitimate school business);
- Exchanging personal gifts (beyond the customary student-teacher gifts) and/or
- Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for meals or movies, shopping, traveling, and recreational activities) outside of school-sponsored events except as participants in organized community activities.

Reporting Violations

Students and/or their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the principal (or other appropriate administrator) if they believe a teacher or other staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates this policy.

Staff members are required to notify promptly the appropriate building administrator or superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of this policy shall be reviewed by the appropriate administrator and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Health and Human Services and/or law enforcement in accordance with the Board's Policy.

School Unit Obligation to Report to Maine Department of Education (MDOE)

Any staff member holding a credential should be aware that violation of this policy may result in revocation or suspension of a certificate if it endangers the health, safety or welfare of a student.

The Superintendent/designee will notify the MDOE immediately if a credential holder is disciplined, suspended or terminated as a result of a "covered investigation" (as defined in 20-A MRSA §13025) in which the school unit determined that a student's health, safety or welfare was endangered.

As soon as practicable, the school unit will provide to the MDOE any final report produced in support of the school unit's decision to discipline, suspend or terminate the credential holder. The credential holder may submit a written rebuttal to the report to the MDOE.

The Superintendent/designee will notify the MDOE immediately if a credential holder who is the subject of a covered investigation leaves the school unit's employment for any reason prior to the conclusion of the covered investigation.

Policy to be Included in Handbooks (or disseminated by other means)

This policy shall be included in all employee, student and volunteer handbooks.

Cross Reference:

- [ACAA-Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students](#)
- [GCSA - Employee Computer/Internet Use](#)
- [JLF- Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect](#)

Adopted:

- December 14, 2004

Updated/Reviewed:

- May 8, 2012
- May 6, 2013
- August 27, 2013
- June 9, 2026

[Word version](#)

Revision #3

Created 3 June 2026 19:08:16 by Andrea Fuller

Updated 11 June 2026 14:48:54 by Andrea Fuller