

Hermon School Department

Staff Conduct with Students

The Hermon School Committee 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.

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.

Prohibited Conduct

Examples of unacceptable conduct by staff members that are expressly prohibited 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 the School Committee'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;
- Inviting or accepting students as friends on social networking sites;
- 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 staff.)*
- 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; and
- Permitting students to address you by your first name, nickname or otherwise in an overly familiar manner.

Before engaging in the following activities, staff members, in their professional capacity, will review the activity with their principal or supervisor, as appropriate unless there is a family or other appropriate relationship originating outside the school system:

- Being alone with individual students out of public view;
- 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;
- Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by computer, telephone, text messaging 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.

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.

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.

Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of this policy shall 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 School Committee's policy.