



RESOLUTION NO.: 2019.047

GREAT VALLEY STAFF/STUDENT INTERACTION POLICY

GVA recognizes its responsibility to make and enforce all rules and regulations governing student and employee behavior to bring about the safest and most learning-conducive environment possible.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student. For purposes of this policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent excessive damage to property.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Staff/Student Behavior

This policy is intended to guide all GVA staff in conducting themselves in a manner that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of school employees and to specify the boundaries between students and staff.

Although this policy gives direction, it is each staff member's obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents, students, colleagues, or school leaders.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "boundaries" is defined as acceptable professional behavior by staff members while interacting with a student. Trespassing the boundaries of a student/staff relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member's perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parent point of view. The objective of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct, harmful, or abusive.

Staff must understand their own responsibility for ensuring that they do not violate the boundaries as written in this policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for disciplinary purposes. Violations could subject the employee to discipline up to and including termination. Thus, it is crucial that all employees learn this policy thoroughly and apply the lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors to their daily activities. Although sincere, competent interaction with students certainly fosters learning, student/staff interactions must have boundaries surrounding potential activities, locations and intentions.

The following examples are not exhaustive lists:

Unacceptable Staff/Student Behaviors (Violations of this Policy)

- (a) Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal and intimate nature.
- (b) Any type of inappropriate physical contact with a student. This includes but is not limited to; massages, lingering touches, squeezing, stroking of hair, touches to private body areas.
- (c) Intentionally being alone with a student away from the school.
- (d) Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments, storytelling or jokes.
- (e) Seeking emotional involvement with a student for your benefit.
- (f) Becoming involved with a student such that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable and Recommended Staff/Student Behaviors

- (a) Getting parents' written consent for any off school property or after-school activities.
- (b) Emails, text, phone and instant messages to students must be very professional and pertaining to school activities or classes.
- (c) Keeping the door open when alone with a student.
- (d) Keeping reasonable space between you and your students.
- (e) Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries.
- (f) Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student.
- (g) Asking for advice from fellow staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries.
- (h) Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with the student or has the potential to become severe.
- (i) Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later.
- (j) Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students or coworkers.
- (k) Recommend asking another staff member to be present if you will be alone with a student.
- (l) Pats on the back, high fives and handshakes are acceptable.
- (m) Hugs of an appropriate nature, often student initiated, that are quick, non-sexual, and side to side when possible. For the purpose of this policy, the term "hug" is defined as a quick and appropriate embrace between a staff member and student as form of admiration, respect and/or care. GVA's philosophy of Safe, Loved and Learning allows for safe interactions such as hugs in order to support students overall well-being and foster authentic adult interactions. Hugs should in no way be excessive, aggressive, lasting for a prolonged period of time.
- (n) Keeping your professional conduct a high priority.

This policy does not prevent: 1) touching a student for the purpose of guiding them along a physical path; 2) helping them up after a fall; 3) engaging in a rescue or application of Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or other emergency first-aid. Nor does it prohibit the use of reasonable force and touching in self-defense or in the defense of another. Excessive force is prohibited.

Boundaries Reporting

When any staff member, parent, or student becomes aware of a staff member (or volunteer, guest, vendor) having violated the boundaries specified in this policy, or has a strong suspicion of misconduct, he or she must report the suspicion to an Administrator promptly. Reasonable suspicion means something perceived in spite of inconclusive or slight evidence. It is based on facts that would lead a reasonable person to believe the conduct occurred. Prompt reporting is essential to protect students, the suspected staff member, any witnesses, and the school as a whole. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness of, or concern about, student behavior that crosses boundaries, or any situation in which a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse. The Administrator will notify the Chief Executive Officer or designee promptly upon investigation.

Child Abuse / Sexual Abuse Reporting (Mandatory Reporting)

If, within your professional capacity or within the scope of your employment, you observe or obtain possession of knowledge that a child has been a victim of child abuse or sexual abuse, or you reasonably suspect it, California Penal Code Section 11166 requires you to immediately report this information or suspicion directly to a child protective agency or the police. The report shall be made by phone immediately and a subsequent written report must be sent within 36 hours of your knowledge or suspicion of the abuse. Please refer to GVA policy resolution 2019.046 for detailed reporting requirements.

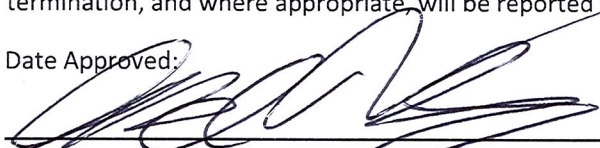
Investigating

The Administrator will promptly investigate, document and report to the Chief Executive Officer or designee the investigation of any allegation of sexual misconduct or inappropriate behavior, using such support staff or outside assistance, as he or she deems necessary and appropriate under the circumstances. Throughout this fact-finding process, the investigating Administrator, and all others privy to the investigation, shall protect the privacy interests of any affected student(s) and/or staff member(s) including any potential witnesses, as reasonably as possible. The Chief Executive Officer or designee shall promptly notify the Governing Board in closed session of the existence and status of any investigations. Upon completion of any such investigations, the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall report to the Governing Board any conclusions reached. The Chief Executive Officer or designee shall consult with legal counsel, as appropriate, prior to, during, and after conducting any investigation.

Consequences

Staff members who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination, and where appropriate, will be reported to authorities for potential legal action.

Date Approved:



Signature, President or Secretary

Board Action: *1st Nisan, 2nd Meray*

AYES: *Wolf, Nisan, Payne, Gianelli, Meray*

NAYS: *None*

ABSENT: *Tash, Jamison*

ABSTAIN: *none*

Rev. 4/2019