

All Personnel Professional Conduct by Staff	D.21
<i>Adopted: July 23, 2013 Revised: September 8, 2015</i>	

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 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 must guide the conduct of all staff members.

Specific Responsibilities

Essential to the success of ongoing 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 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 school district patrons.
4. Consistency 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 or similar 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 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. Sponsors or chaperones shall not sleep in the same rooms with students on overnight activity trips unless the sponsor or chaperone is the parent or legal guardian of the student. Likewise, instructors, sponsors or chaperones shall not accompany a single student on a trip or activity unless written approval is received from parents or legal guardian of the student and the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee. 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 in connection with classes and extracurricular activities. 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.

The district has adopted policies relating to employee and student use of wireless telecommunication devices and social networking sites. Employees shall adhere to the provisions listed in the districts policies "when performing work-related functions in school or at school-related activities and when communicating with students.

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, pregnancy, gender, gender expression or identity, 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.

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 school property and/or funds constitutes unacceptable behavior. Employees must adhere to accepted procedures of sound accounting, reporting, business, and purchasing practices.

Every employee of the 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.