Title: **Professional Boundaries Policy**
Code: 2010
Section: 2000 - People

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES: ADULT/STUDENT INTERACTION POLICY

This policy applies to all Aspire School employees, volunteers, contractors, and governing board ("Board") members[1] (collectively referred to as "adults" herein).

Professional Boundaries and Conduct

Aspire Public Schools recognizes its responsibility to make and enforce all rules and regulations governing student and adult 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 damage to property.

For clarification purposes, the following examples are offered for direction and guidance of School employees, volunteers, contractors, and Board members:

Examples of Permitted Actions (Not Corporal Punishment):

1. Stopping a student from fighting with another student.
2. Preventing a pupil from committing an act of vandalism.
3. Defending oneself from physical injury or assault by a student.
4. Forcing a pupil to give up a weapon or dangerous object.

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[1] This policy does not apply to student board members under Education Code 47604.2, or otherwise.

5. Requiring a student on an athletic team to participate in strenuous physical training activities designed to strengthen or condition team members or improve their coordination, agility, or physical skills;
6. Engaging in group calisthenics, team drills, or other physical education or voluntary recreational activities.

Examples of Prohibited Actions (Corporal Punishment):

1. Hitting, shoving, pushing, or physically restraining a student as a means of control.
2. Making unruly students do push-ups, run laps, or perform other physical acts that cause pain or discomfort as a form of punishment.
3. Paddling, swatting, slapping, grabbing, pinching, kicking, or otherwise causing physical pain.

This policy is intended to guide adults in conducting themselves in a way that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of them and to specify the boundaries between adults and students.

Although this policy gives specific, clear direction, it is each adult's obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents/guardians, students, colleagues, or School leaders. One viable standard that can be quickly applied, when you are unsure if certain conduct is acceptable, is to ask yourself, "Would I be engaged in this conduct if my family or colleagues were standing next to me?"

For the purposes of this policy, the term "boundaries" is defined as acceptable professional behavior by an adult while interacting with a student, whether during school hours or outside of school hours, including through social media platforms, text messaging, and other forms of communication that do not otherwise include a student's parent/guardian. Trespassing the boundaries of a student/adult relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

Professional boundaries apply not only between students and staff, volunteers, and contractors, and Board members, but also among and between students, and among and between adults employed, volunteering, or under contract with the School. All members of the School community are expected to maintain professional conduct that models appropriate behavior and fosters a safe and respectful learning environment. Additionally, all facilities/areas under School control shall be effectively supervised to promote a safe environment for students and individuals performing services on behalf of the School.

Some activities may seem innocent from an adult's perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parent/guardian point of view. The objective of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors is not

to restrain innocent, positive relationships between adults and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct.

Adults must understand their own responsibility for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is crucial that all adults 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/adult interactions must have boundaries surrounding potential activities, locations, and intentions.

Duty to Report Suspected Misconduct

When any employee reasonably suspects or believes that another staff member may have crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, they must immediately report the matter to a School administrator. All reports shall be as confidential as possible under the circumstances. It is the duty of the administrator to investigate and thoroughly report the situation. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness or concern of student behavior that crosses boundaries or where a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse, child abuse, or neglect.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Staff/Student Behavior

Aspire Public Schools is committed to ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment. The following guidelines outline acceptable and unacceptable behaviors to maintain appropriate boundaries between staff and students. This policy is intended to inform students and families about the high standards of behavior and professionalism expected from school staff.

Examples of Specific Behaviors

The following examples are not an exhaustive list:**Unacceptable Staff/Student Behaviors:**

- Giving personal and intimate gifts to students.
- Kissing of any kind
- Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student
- Being alone with a student away from school grounds without parental permission.
- Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments, jokes, or stories.

- Seeking emotional involvement with a student or discussing personal troubles or intimate issues with a student.
- Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities without parental permission and formal approval.
- Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.
- Being alone in a room with a student at School with the door closed.
- Allowing students in your home.
- Communication with students via an employee's personal accounts, such as email and/or social media.
- Remarks about the physical attributes or development of anyone.
- Excessive attention toward a particular student. Any use of racial slurs, even when quoting language used by other individuals.

Acceptable Staff/Student Behaviors:

- Obtaining parents' written consent for any off site of after-school activity and obtaining formal approval to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
- Professional Emails, texts, phone and instant messages to students pertaining to school activities or classes (communication shall be limited to school technology)
- Giving students praise and recognition without touching them, and keeping after-class discussions with students professional and brief.
- Keeping the door open when alone with a student.
- Keeping reasonable space between you and your students.
  Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries.
- Keeping parents/guardians informed when a significant issue develops about a student.
- Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief.
- Asking for advice from fellow staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries.
- Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with the student.
- Informing the Principal about situations that have the potential to become more severe.
- Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later.
- Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students or coworkers.
- Asking another staff member to be present if you will be alone with any student with special needs.
- Asking another staff member to be present when you must be alone with a student after regular school hours.
- Giving students praise and recognition without touching them.
- High fives, fist bumps, and handshakes are acceptable.
- Keeping your professional conduct a high priority.

- Asking yourself if your actions are worth your job and career.

If any student or parent suspects that a staff member has crossed professional boundaries, they should immediately report the matter to a school administrator. All reports will be kept as confidential as possible and will be appropriately investigated.

Board Adopted: 06/18/2026