



Georgia Department of Education

Policies and Procedures

Policy Title:	<i>Employee-Student Relationships, State Schools</i>		
Policy Number:	<i>SS-2000 Descriptor Code-GBU-2</i>		
Release Date:	<i>10-08-02</i>	Last Revised:	<i>5-20-09</i>

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline unacceptable behavior and/or actions that are inappropriate and prohibited in regard to employee-student interaction.

Applicability

This policy applies to employees at the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, the Georgia Academy for the Blind, and the Georgia School for the Deaf.

Policy

The Georgia Department of Education is committed to an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. Every school employee is to provide students with appropriate guidance, understanding, and direction, while maintaining a standard of professionalism and acting within accepted standards of conduct. A “student” is anyone enrolled in a Georgia public school from preschool through grade 12, or anyone under the age of 18. A graduating student’s enrollment does not end until August 31st of the year he/she graduates. Graduates that “walk the stage” but return the next school year for continued services are considered “students” and this policy would still apply.

General Provisions

- A. This policy applies to all school employees at all times, whether on or off duty and on or off of school locations.
- B. At all times, students will be treated by teachers and other school employees with respect, courtesy and consideration and in a professional manner. Each school employee is expected to exercise good judgment and professionalism in all interpersonal relationships with students. Such relationships must be and must remain on a teacher-student basis or an employee-student basis.
- C. Teachers must be mindful of their inherent positions of authority and influence over students. Similarly, other school employees also may

- hold positions of authority over students of the school and must be mindful of their authority and influence over students.
- D. Sexual relationships between school employees and students, without regard to the age of the student, are strictly forbidden and may subject the employee to criminal liability.
- E. Other actions that violate this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:
- i. Dating students.
 - ii. Having any interaction/activity of a sexual nature with a student.
 - iii. Committing or attempting to induce students or others to commit an illegal act or act of immoral conduct which may be harmful to others or bring discredit to the school.
 - iv. Supplying alcohol or any illegal substance to a student, allowing a student access to such substances, or failing to take reasonable steps to prevent such access from occurring.
- F. School employees shall, whenever possible, employ safeguards against improper relationships with students and/or claims of such improper relationships. [Note such safeguards may include the following: avoiding altogether or minimizing physical contact, keeping doors open when talking or meeting with students one-on-one, and/or making sure that such meetings with a student take place in rooms with windows and/or others nearby.]
- G. Informal and social involvement with individual students is unprofessional, is not compatible with employee-student relationships, and is inappropriate.
- H. Employees shall not give students rides in vehicles unless acting in the capacity of bus operator for event purposes or approved school related matters.
- I. Employees may not have students stay in their homes or share other room type accommodations.

REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

- A. Complaints and/or concerns regarding alleged violations of this policy shall be made to the School Director and appropriate authorities/agencies.
- B. All employees shall cooperate with any investigation of alleged acts, conduct, or communications in violation of this policy.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS TAKEN

Upon receipt of a report, DOE will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. It also may include reporting to appropriate state or federal authorities, including the

Professional Standards Commission. Action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with Georgia and federal law and DOE policies.

SCOPE OF LIABILITY

Employees are placed on notice that if an employee acts outside the performance of the duties of the position for which the employee is employed, or is guilty of malfeasance, willful neglect of duty, or bad faith, the DOE is not required to defend and indemnify the employee for damages in school-related litigation.

Authority and/or Cross-Reference

- O.C.G.A. 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5
- O.C.G.A. 19-7-5