

EDUCATOR ETHICS/PROTOCOL/BOUNDARIES

Agawam Public Schools recognizes that students need healthy, clearly-defined relationships with adults to feel safe and to develop into competent and responsible human beings. Educators are role models and should not be a student's friend, confidante, or surrogate parent. Professional behavior, values, and responsibilities must be maintained both in and outside of school. Student counseling shall be the responsibility of licensed school counselors.

Massachusetts law requires a school superintendent to report to the Commissioner of Education in writing whenever a licensed educator is dismissed, not renewed, or resigns after committing misconduct that might warrant revocation or other limitation of the educator's license.

The following protocol shall be followed by educators during school hours:

- Follow the Internet Use Policy
- Dress professionally
- Use caution with self-disclosure regarding your personal life
- Avoid being alone with students
- Be consistent in your treatment of students

The following protocol should be followed by educators outside of school:

- Remember you are always an educator and your out-of-school conduct can affect your job security. Refrain from posting personal information on the internet as it can be accessed by students. Always be careful when sending emails.
- Do not extend your contact with students outside of school. Do not send text messages or IMs, give out your telephone number, invite students to your house or allow them to show up. Do not drive students in your car. Do not give personal advice about boyfriends or girlfriends.

Educators should maintain a culture of professionalism and respect that provides a healthy atmosphere for student growth. Therefore, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Correct inappropriate behavior
- Remind students of the limits of your relationship as an educator
- Reaffirm the helping nature of the relationship
- Make a plan for getting the student appropriate help
- Immediately report any incidents of behavior or comments by students that might be misinterpreted later on and don't let situations escalate
- Be friendly but not a friend
- Conversations with students should be warm and caring while providing support for their learning and growth
- Student/teacher conduct should be appropriate and understood by the general population and not laced with "inside" references
- Support the culture of professionalism
- Don't ignore situations
- Help create a culture of intolerance for inappropriate behavior

Agawam Public Schools 2009 - 2010

Approved by School Committee on June 8, 2010, by a vote of 6 – 0 – 1 absent.