

STAFF ETHICS

An effective educational program requires the services of men and women of integrity, high ideals, and human understanding. To maintain and promote these essentials, all employees of the district are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships. These standards include the following:

- The maintenance of just and courteous professional relationships with students, parents, staff members, and others.
- The maintenance of their own efficiency and knowledge of the developments in their fields of work.
- The transaction of all official business with the properly designated authorities of the school system.
- The establishment of friendly and intelligent cooperation between the community and the school district.
- Favorable representation of the school district at local events that are in recognition of the schools' contributions to the community.
- The placement of the welfare of children as the first concern of the school district, thus appointments to positions and promotion must be based solely on merit. The use of pressure on school officials for appointment or promotion is unethical.
- Restraint from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views, or selfish propaganda of any kind.
- Directing any criticism of other staff members or of any department of the school district toward the improvement of the school district. Such constructive criticism is to be made directly to the particular school administrator who has the administrative responsibility for improving the situation and then to the Superintendent if necessary.

School employees hold positions of public trust. High standards of honesty, integrity, and fairness are to be exhibited by each school district employee when involved in any school district activity. Ethical behavior by staff is required and expected at all times while fulfilling one's employment responsibilities and when at all school functions.

District employees are required and expected to:

1. treat learners, parents, fellow employees, and community members with respect. Conduct which is prohibited includes, but is not limited to:
 - inappropriate verbal, visual or physical conduct, including jokes that demean an individual or group of individuals, spreading gossip about any individual, threatening another individual and all types of bullying behavior;
 - without proper authorization and authority violating another person's right of privacy and/or intentionally invading another person's personal space;
 - knowingly falsely blame an individual for conduct not done by the person.

2. promote a safe, nurturing, and positive school and work environment. Conduct which is prohibited includes, but is not limited to:
 - any conduct that is severe and objectively offensive so that it creates or results in an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or learning environment or has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an employee's or learner's performance;
 - threatening, harassing, punishing or retaliating behavior against learners and/or other employees.
3. maintain confidentiality concerning learners, families and employees.
4. act in a manner consistent with District policies, legal and contractual standards, responsibilities, and obligations.
5. model and promote appropriate dress and language.
6. report to a school administrator knowledge of mismanagement, waste of funds, misuse of school property, abuse of authority, threats to safety, violations of policies and regulations, or other conduct that damages integrity or reputation of the school district.
7. refrain from using school employment to promote personal political and/or religious views.

In addition to the foregoing, the District, within this policy, adopts and incorporates into this policy as if set forth in full, the South Dakota Department of Education Professional Teachers Ethics as set forth in ARSD 24:08:03. The Professional Teachers Ethics as incorporated into this policy applies to:

- Teachers - a person charged with responsibility in the field of education and certified by the secretary of the Department of Education as a teacher or other specialist employed or contracted to provide services in an educational setting,
- Education Specialists - a person with specialized training or licensure, not serving as a classroom teacher, but employed or contracted to provide services in an educational setting, and
- Non Certified Educators - a person charged with responsibility in the field of education who is not certified by the secretary of the Department of Education as a teacher, administrator, or other education specialist, but who is employed or contracted to provide services in an educational setting.

Furthermore, the District, within this policy, adopts and incorporates into this policy as if set forth in full, the South Dakota Department of Education Professional Administrators Ethics as set forth in ARSD 24:11:03. The Professional Administrators Ethics as incorporated into this policy applies to:

- the Superintendent,
- the Business Manager, and
- all other educational administrators.

Any employee who believes a staff member has engaged in conduct which violates the code of conduct shall immediately report the alleged misconduct to their immediate supervisor. If the concern/complaint involves the individual's immediate supervisor, the complaint may be filed with any administrator within the school district.

All complaints will be investigated and should the investigation result in a determination of unethical behavior by a school employee such unethical behavior shall constitute just cause for discipline, up to and including termination of employment. A complaint reported which was intentionally and knowingly false will result in disciplinary action being taken against the person or persons involved in the false complaint being made.

Legal References: [~~SDCL 13-43-25~~ \(Rules of Commission\)](#)
[ARSD 24:08](#) (Professional Teachers Ethics)
[ARSD 24:11](#) (Professional Administrators Ethics)

Cross References: GBCA: Staff Conflict of Interest
GBCB: Staff Conduct
GBCBA: Freedom of Expression

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