

CLCS CHARTER SCHOOL POLICY

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES: STAFF/LEARNER INTERACTION POLICY

Community Learning Center Schools, Inc. (CLCS) recognizes its responsibility to make and enforce all rules and regulations governing learner and employee behavior to bring about the safest learning environment possible.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

This policy is intended to guide all School faculty and staff in conducting themselves in a way that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of school employees and to specify the boundaries between learners and staff. Trespassing the boundaries of a learner/CLCS employee relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust. All staff must carefully review this policy along with each of the examples given in the policy related to acceptable and unacceptable employee behavior. (See Examples section below.)

Although this policy gives specific, clear direction, it is each staff member's obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents, learners, 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?"**

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member's perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a learner or parent point of view. The objective of providing the examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours listed below is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and learners, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct.

Staff members 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 employees learn this policy thoroughly and apply the lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours to their daily activities. Although sincere, competent interaction with learners certainly fosters learning, learner/staff interactions must have boundaries surrounding potential activities, locations and intentions.

DUTY TO REPORT

When any employee becomes aware of another staff member having crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, he or she must speak to this staff member if the violation appears minor, or report the matter to the school administrator. If the observed behaviour appears significant, it is the duty of every staff member to immediately report it to an 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.

USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA BY STAFF TO COMMUNICATE WITH LEARNERS

Any participation by any CLCS employee with learners, including through the use of electronic media or technology, should always be limited to School business. Participation by CLCS employees with learners in social media such as Facebook, MySpace, etc., or other similar means, is highly discouraged, and can lead to violations of this policy.

Specifically, CLCS employees are highly discouraged from inviting learners to join social networks and insofar as such behavior occurs, employees will be responsible for any exposure/access by learners to inappropriate or unprofessional content, including words or pictures.

EXAMPLES

EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS (VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY)

- (a) Giving gifts to an individual learner that are of an intimate nature.
- (b) Kissing of any kind.
- (c) Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a learner
- (d) Intentionally being alone with a learner away from the school.
- (e) Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments.
- (f) Sexual jokes.
- (g) Seeking emotional involvement with a learner.
- (h) Listening to or telling personal stories that are sexually oriented.
- (i) Employees discussing their personal troubles or intimate issues with a learner .
- (j) Becoming involved with a learner such that that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.
- (k) Initiating a meeting in a room with a learner at school and closing the door. (Exception for counselors and administrators when it is necessary to protect the privacy and safety of a learner.)
- (l) Allowing learners in your home except for visits with your children.

- (m) Sending emails, text messages or letters to learners if the content is not about school activities

EXAMPLES OF CAUTIONARY BEHAVIORS

These behaviors should only be exercised when a reasonable and prudent person, acting as an educator, is prevented from using a better practice or behavior. Staff members should inform their supervisor of the circumstance and occurrence prior to or immediately after the occurrence

- (a) Being alone in a room with a learner at school with the door closed.
- (b) Remarks about the physical attributes or development of anyone.
- (c) Excessive attention toward a particular learner.
- (e) Giving learners a ride to/from school or school activities without parent permission.

EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE AND RECOMMENDED BEHAVIORS

- (a) Getting school and parental written consent for any after-school activity.
- (b) Obtaining formal approval to take learners off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
- (c) E-mails, text, phone and instant messages to learners must be very professional and pertaining to school activities or classes (Communication should be limited to school technology).
- (d) Keeping the door open when alone with a learner.
- (e) Keeping reasonable space between you and your learners.
- (f) Stopping and correcting learners if they cross your own personal boundaries.
- (g) Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a learner.
- (h) Keeping after-class discussions with a learner professional and brief.
- (i) Asking for advice from fellow staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries.
- (j) Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with the learner.
- (k) Informing your Lead Facilitator of situations that have the potential to become more severe.
- (l) Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later.
- (m) Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of learners or coworkers.
- (n) Asking another staff member to be present when you must be alone with a learner.
- (o) Giving learners praise and recognition without touching them.
- (p) Pats on the back, high fives and handshakes are acceptable.
- (q) Keeping your professional conduct a high priority.
- (r) Asking yourself if your actions are worth your job and career.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any learner. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a learner.

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, learners, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to property.

For clarification purposes, the following examples are offered for direction and guidance of CLCS personnel:

A. Examples of PERMITTED actions (NOT corporal punishment)

1. Physically restraining a learner from doing bodily harm to another person or themselves.
2. Preventing a learner from committing an act of vandalism;
3. Defending yourself from physical injury or assault by a learner;
4. Forcing a learner to give up a weapon or dangerous object;
5. Requiring 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.

B. Examples of PROHIBITED actions (corporal punishment)

1. Hitting, shoving, or pushing a learner.
2. Physically restraining a learner as a means of control, except in order to carry out Permitted actions, 1-4.
3. Making unruly learners do push-ups, run laps, or perform other physical acts including lengthy punitive writing drills that cause pain or discomfort as a form of punishment;
4. Paddling, swatting, slapping, grabbing, pinching, kicking, or otherwise causing physical pain.
5. Throwing objects at learners or in their general direction except in the context of voluntary recreational activities or as an appropriate component of an educational program.

