

Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified

Staff/Student Non-Fraternization

Adults who have contact with children and adolescents through school activities have the responsibility not to betray or misuse their privileged position. Students develop a special trust in school staff by virtue of the school system's authority and the important role the schools play in their lives. Adults must never take advantage of students' vulnerability or of their confidence that adults in school will behave appropriately in relationships with them.

Staff members should strive to secure individual and group discipline, and should be treated with respect by students at all times. By the same token, staff members should extend to students the same respect and courtesy that they, as staff members, have a right to demand.

Although it is desired that staff members have a sincere interest in students as individuals, partiality and the appearance of impropriety must be avoided. Excessive informal and/or social involvement with students is prohibited. Such conduct is not compatible with professional ethics and, as such, will not be tolerated.

It is the policy of the Board of Education to prohibit any sexual relationship, contact or sexually nuanced behavior or communication (verbal or non-verbal) between a staff member and a student, while the student is enrolled in the school system. The prohibition extends to students of the opposite sex or the same sex as the staff member, and applies regardless of whether the student or the staff member is the initiator of the behavior and whether or not the student welcomes or reciprocates the attention.

Electronic Communications

Staff members are encouraged to communicate with students and parents/guardians for educational purposes using a variety of effective methods, including electronic communication. As with other forms of communication, staff members must maintain professional boundaries with students while using electronic communications regardless of whether the communication methods are provided by the District or the staff member uses his/her own personal electronic communication devices, accounts, webpages or other forms of electronic communication.

The District's policies, regulations, and expectations regarding in-person communications at school and during the school day also apply to electronic communications for educational purposes, regardless of when those communications occur. Staff communications must be professional and student communications must be appropriate.

(cf. 4118.112/4218.112 – Sexual Harassment)
(cf. 4118.23/4218.23 – Conduct)
(cf. 5141.4 – Child Abuse/Neglect)

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Staff/Student Non-Fraternization (continued)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-53a-71 Sexual assault in the second degree: Class C or B felony.

10-151 Employment of teachers. Definitions. Notice and hearing on failure to renew or termination of contract. Appeal

Policy adopted: August 18, 2009
Policy revised: May 20, 2014

PUTNAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Staff members are expected to use good judgment in their relationships with students both inside and outside of the school context including, but not limited to, the following guidelines:

1. Staff members shall not make derogatory comments to students regarding the school staff, and/or other students.
2. The exchange of purchased gifts between staff members and students is discouraged.
3. Staff-sponsored parties, at which students are in attendance, unless they are a part of the school's extracurricular program and are properly supervised, are prohibited.
4. Staff members shall not fraternize, written or verbally, with students except on matters that pertain to school-related issues.
5. Staff members shall not associate with students at any time in any situation or activity which could be considered sexually suggestive or involve the presence or use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.
6. Dating between staff members and students is prohibited.
7. Staff members shall not use insults or sarcasm against students as a method of forcing compliance with requirements or expectations.
8. Staff members shall maintain a reasonable standard of care for the supervision, control, and protection of students commensurate with their assigned duties and responsibilities.
9. Staff members shall not send students on personal errands.
10. Staff members shall not attempt to counsel, assess, diagnose or treat a student's personal problem relating to sexual behavior, substance abuse, mental or physical health and/or family relationships but instead, should refer the student to the appropriate individual or agency for assistance.
11. Staff members shall not disclose information concerning a student, other than directory information, to any person not authorized to receive such information. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning assessments, ability scores, grades, behavior, mental or physical health and/or family background.
12. Sexual relations with students, regardless of age and/or consent, is prohibited and will result in dismissal.

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Staff/Student Non-Fraternization (continued)

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Regulation approved: August 18, 2009
Regulation revised: November 12, 2021

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