

**EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
STAFF-STUDENT NON-FRATERNIZATION**

The relationship of staff to students must be one of professional cooperation and respect. Staff must set appropriate boundaries with students and conduct themselves in a manner that will maintain a professional relationship with students at all times. Decisions regarding this policy are subject to the discretion of Division Directors and the Superintendent after considering the following three issues:

1. The student's best interest
2. The school's best interest
3. The school's liability

STAFF

Staff is defined as the following:

1. Any individual employed by the Texas School for the Deaf, including any student teachers, substitutes, interns and practicum students.
2. Employees, agents and owners/partners of contractors or agencies
3. All volunteers

STUDENT

Student is defined as any individual enrolled in Texas School for the Deaf.

PURPOSE

This policy is designed to protect both staff and students and to assure the safety and well-being of all TSD students and staff.

**PROHIBITED
CONDUCT**

Texas School for the Deaf recognizes the very positive benefits to be gained from student interaction with adult role models who work on campus. These interactions are encouraged and supported when they are kept on a professional level and promote healthy social, emotional, and intellectual development.

Staff are prohibited from engaging in any of the following types of prohibited conduct, regardless of whether the conduct occurs during or outside of school hours. The following list of prohibited conduct does not, and is not intended to, constitute the entire list of conduct for which discipline may be imposed.

1. Engaging in any romantic or sexual relationships with students, including dating, flirting, sexual contact, inappropriate physical displays of affection, or sexually suggestive comments between staff and students, regardless of whether staff or student initiates the behavior, whether the relationship is consensual, or whether the student had parent permission, including any activity that gives the perception of such relationships or behaviors.
2. Fostering, grooming, encouraging or participating in inappropriate emotionally or socially intimate relationships in which the relationship is outside the bounds of the reasonable, professional staff-student relationship in which the relationship could reasonably cause a student to view the staff person as more than a staff member or any activity that gives the perception of an inappropriate relationship.
3. Allowing any student/child to visit their home, or visiting a student/child's home, for reasons other than appropriate visits with written approval by parents/legal guardians. (All other professional or educational reasons may require specific approval from the Division

Director and the Superintendent.)

4. Initiating or continuing communications with students for reasons unrelated to any appropriate purpose, including oral, signed or written communication, telephone, VP calls, electronic communication such as texting, instant messaging, email, chat rooms, Facebook, or other social networking sites; webcams or photographs. Electronic and online communications with students, including those through personal accounts, should be accessible to supervisors and professional in content and tone. (The only exception to this rule are emergency situations that may have serious safety ramifications.)
5. Permitting any student or child to reside in their home unless they are parents, relatives or legal guardians.
6. Making presentations of gifts, clothing or cash to student/child or their families unless through school sponsored donations and approved through the Superintendent.
7. Allowing any student/child to travel in their personal vehicle for school-related or non-school related matters unless specific approval is given by the Division Director or Superintendent to provide for the safety and care of the student.
8. Sharing personal information and giving advice on non-school related issues (e.g. marriage, dating, sex, mental health, suicide, etc.)
9. Providing alcohol (regardless of age) or drugs—either prescription or illegal (except for those provided in accordance with TSD procedure on medication administration)—to students.
10. Accompanying a student/child to a non-school related activity without parent, division director and superintendent approval.

REPORTING
PROCEDURES

All TSD staff have a duty to report. Any person with knowledge or suspicion of an improper relationship between staff and a student must immediately report the conduct to their Supervisor, Division Director or the School Social Workers.

Staff who make a good faith effort to report any suspected fraternization violation, or who cooperate with inquiries or investigations related to the allocation shall be protected from retaliation.

INVESTIGATIONS

Complaints of inappropriate fraternization of staff members with students shall be investigated by TSD. Investigations of allegations of inappropriate staff-student relationships shall follow the same process as investigations of student abuse, neglect and improper care.

SANCTION

The school will take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, against any staff member found to have violated this non-fraternization policy.

EXCEPTION

If any employee feels there should be an exception to this policy he/she must request that exception to the Division Director or Superintendent.