

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Series 900

Policy Title: PERSONAL CONDUCT

Code 901.8

Employees are expected to maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality in the conduct of District business and are required to comply with and conform to the Idaho law and the Code of Ethics of the Idaho Teaching Profession.

In addition to the conduct enumerated in Idaho law and the Code of Ethics of the Idaho Teaching Profession, an employee should not dispense or utilize any information gained from employment with the District, accept gifts or benefits, or participate in business enterprises or employment which create a conflict of interest with the faithful and impartial discharge of the employee's District duties. A District employee may, prior to acting in a manner which may impinge on any fiduciary duty, disclose the nature of the private interest which creates a conflict. Care should be taken to avoid using, or avoid the appearance of using, official positions and confidential information for personal advantage or gain.

Further, employees should hold confidential all information deemed to be not for public consumption as determined by law and Board policy. Employees shall also respect the confidentiality of people served in the course of the employee's duties and use information gained in a responsible manner. Discretion should be employed even within the school system's own network of communication.

District employees who are contacted by the media should direct such inquiries to the Superintendent.

Personnel Conflict of Interest

It is not uncommon for a District to employ people who are related to one another or romantically involved with one another. However, it is inappropriate for one family member or romantic partner to have direct influence over the other's conditions of employment (i.e., salary, hours worked, shifts, evaluation, etc.).

For the purpose of this policy, family member or romantic partners are defined as spouse, domestic partner, daughter, son, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sister, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, or son-in-law.

In any case, when employees are unsure about a potential conflict, they should fully disclose the circumstances in writing to their supervisor. If one family member or romantic partner has influence over another family member or romantic partner's conditions of employment, the following should occur:

1. In collaboration with the supervisor, the involved employees will be provided 30 days to make a decision regarding a change. Options include, but are not limited to:
 - A. One employee applying to transfer to another area; or,
 - B. Revising the reporting structure in the department so that one employee no longer has direct influence over the other employee's conditions of employment; or
2. If a decision is not reached by the end of the thirty-day period, the department head, or next level of administrator, will resolve the situation.

Nothing in this policy shall require the Superintendent or Board, in the case when the conflict of interest directly relates to the Superintendent, to transfer an employee to a different position in an effort to avoid a conflict of interest if doing so would not be in the best interest of the District.

Insubordinate Conduct

In the educational setting there are high expectations for employee behavior. This is necessary to ensure effective and efficient operation of the school and to model and reinforce appropriate professional interactions for our students. Accordingly, employees shall treat all administrators, students, and colleagues in an appropriate professional manner.

Employees shall comply with all work-related orders, instructions, and directives issued by a proper authority. Insubordination; manifest disrespect; acts or language which hamper(s) the school's ability to control, manage, or function; displays of unacceptable modeling of rules for students or staff; or any other serious breaches involving improper attitudes or improper action toward persons in positions of authority are just cause for and may result in employee discipline, up to and including possible termination.

Examples of improper conduct include, but are not limited to:

1. Disobeying an appropriate order, instruction or directive of a supervising employee or administrator;
2. Refusing to accept a reasonable and proper work assignment or directive of a supervising employee or administrator;
3. Disputing or ridiculing authority;
4. Exceeding authority; and/or
5. Using vulgar or profane language to a supervising employee or administrator.

Collegial Collaborative Expectations: Our students deserve learning environments where professionalism, respect, and integrity are consistently modeled by the adults who serve them. As educators and staff members, we recognize that our words, actions, and interactions influence students not only academically but also in their understanding of responsible citizenship and respectful relationships. The Lapwai School District is committed to maintaining the highest standards of professional and personal conduct, and we expect all employees to demonstrate

behavior that reflects these values in their work with students, colleagues, families, and the community. The expectations for modeling appropriate behavior for Lapwai students include:

1. Employees will maintain professional relationships with colleagues characterized by respect, honesty, and cooperation.
2. Staff shall refrain from conduct which undermines the professional reputation or effectiveness of colleagues.
3. Staff are encouraged to go to the source addressing concerns with colleagues directly and professionally, followed by the appropriate supervisory channels.
4. Engaging in gossip, rumors, or disparaging remarks about colleagues is not acceptable.
5. Communicate in a manner that reflects professionalism, even during disagreements.
6. Hostile, vulgar, or profane language, sarcasm, or behavior that undermines working relationships will not be tolerated.
7. Employees are expected to demonstrate reliability and respect for colleagues by arriving on time and prepared to fulfill their professional responsibilities. Timely arrival supports the smooth operation of the school, ensures appropriate supervision and support for students, and reflects fairness and equity among team members who depend on one another to maintain a consistent and effective learning environment. When unforeseen circumstances arise, employees should communicate promptly with their supervisor and follow established procedures.
8. Employees are expected to engage fully and actively in professional development, staff meetings, and scheduled collaboration sessions. Being present, prepared, and contributing to discussions demonstrates respect for colleagues' time and expertise, supports a culture of continuous learning, and ensures that professional growth directly benefits student learning and school success. When conflicts or barriers arise, employees should communicate proactively with their supervisor to ensure participation remains meaningful and productive.

Transporting Students:

To ensure the safety of students and staff while protecting employees and the district from liability, all student transportation must follow approved district procedures and state law. Staff members shall not transport students in personal vehicles or permit students to operate or ride in staff personal vehicles under any circumstance related to school activities. Exceptions may be granted only with prior administrator approval when all other reasonable transportation options have been exhausted and the transportation is determined to be necessary and appropriate.

Use of Approved Transportation Only:

Staff must utilize district-owned, leased, or formally contracted vehicles for transporting students. All transportation must be pre-approved and aligned with district procedures.

- **Prohibition on Personal Vehicle:**

Employees are prohibited from:

- Driving students in their personal vehicle (even with parent permission)
- Allowing a student to drive a staff member's personal vehicle

- Arranging informal or “off-the-record” transportation for students
- **No Exceptions Based on Convenience or Urgency:**
Situations such as:
 - Missed buses
 - After-school activities
 - Emergencies (unless directed by administration/emergency services) do not justify use of personal vehicles
- **Boundary Protection:**
Staff must maintain clear professional boundaries and avoid situations that could:
 - Lead to allegations of misconduct
 - Create one-on-one, unsupervised transport scenarios
 - Blur roles between professional and personal responsibilities
- **Authorization & Supervision**
Only staff who are:
 - Approved drivers
 - Properly licensed
 - Covered under district insurance may transport students using district vehicles

Expectations for Working with Parents and the Community

1. Respectful and Professional Communication

Employees will communicate with parents, guardians, and community members in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner, even in situations involving disagreement or concern.

2. Partnership in Student Success

Staff recognize parents and guardians as important partners in supporting student learning and well-being. Employees will work collaboratively with families to promote positive educational outcomes.

3. Timely and Clear Communication

Employees will make reasonable efforts to respond to parent and community inquiries in a timely and constructive manner and will provide clear, accurate information related to student learning, school expectations, and district programs.

4. Listening and Responsiveness

Staff will listen thoughtfully to concerns or questions from families and community members and seek to resolve issues through respectful dialogue and appropriate school or district processes.

5. Cultural Awareness and Respect

Employees will demonstrate respect for the diverse cultural backgrounds, traditions, and perspectives represented within the school community and communicate in ways that promote inclusion and understanding.

6. Maintaining Professional Boundaries

Interactions with parents and community members will remain professional and focused on student learning, school operations, and the well-being of students.

7. Confidentiality and Privacy

Employees will protect student privacy and comply with confidentiality requirements when communicating with parents and community members.

8. Positive Representation of the District

Employees serve as representatives of the district and are expected to conduct themselves in ways that reflect positively on the school, demonstrate professionalism, and support community trust.

9. Legal and Ethical Participation in Student Support Meetings

Employees are expected to participate fully and responsibly in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and all other student support conferences. Scheduling and participation should prioritize the needs and availability of the student's family, reflecting our legal obligations and commitment to equity and inclusion. While convenience for staff is considered, the primary focus must be on meaningful family engagement, collaborative decision-making, and ensuring that all students receive the services to which they are entitled. It remains our professional responsibility to prioritize the availability of the parent. Refusal to participate in this legally required process is a violation of the professional standard expectations outline in this policy.

Social Media Professional Standards: Social media and digital communication platforms are widely used forms of communication within our communities. Employees are expected to exercise professional judgment when using social media, recognizing that online conduct can affect students, colleagues, families, and the reputation of the school district. Even when using personal accounts, employees should be mindful that their actions may be associated with their role as educators and staff members.

Employees are expected to:

1. Maintain Professional Boundaries with Students

Employees should avoid establishing personal social media connections with currently enrolled students unless the communication occurs through district-approved platforms used for educational purposes.

2. Protect Student Privacy and Confidentiality

Employees must not post or share confidential student information, images, or personally identifiable information without appropriate permission and in accordance with student privacy laws and district policy.

3. Communicate Respectfully and Professionally

Employees should refrain from posting content that could reasonably be interpreted as harassing, discriminatory, threatening, or disrespectful toward students, families, colleagues, or community members.

4. Avoid Misrepresentation of the District

Employees should not present personal opinions as official district positions unless authorized to do so.

5. Demonstrate Professional Judgment

Employees are encouraged to consider how their online posts, comments, or shared content may reflect on their professional responsibilities and the trust placed in them by students, families, and the community.

6. Follow District Communication Channels

Official communication related to school business, student matters, or district programs should occur through district-approved communication platforms whenever possible.

7. Support a Positive School Community

Employees should model responsible digital citizenship and contribute to an online environment that reflects the district's commitment to respect, professionalism, and student well-being.

Professional Conduct Accountability: Employees are expected to take responsibility for their own professional conduct. While concerns or observations about the actions of colleagues may be shared through appropriate channels, attempts to deflect responsibility by focusing on the behavior of others will be documented yet **will not exempt the employee from addressing and correcting their own actions**. All responses to conduct concerns are intended to support professional growth, maintain a respectful work environment, and ensure consistent modeling of behavior for students.

Violations of personal conduct standards may result in the following corrective actions:

1. **Informal Coaching:** The administrator or supervisor discusses expectations and reviews appropriate conduct.
2. **Written Reprimand:** Formal documentation placed in the employee personnel file outlining the violation and corrective expectations.
3. **Professional Improvement Plan:** Targeted support, training, or supervision to correct behavior which is documented in writing followed by monitoring of adequate progress.
4. **Formal Evaluation Documentation:** Personal conduct violations documented in the appropriate objectives of the employee evaluation.
5. **Referral to the Professional Standards Commission:** Where appropriate violations may be reported to the Professional Standards Commission for review.
6. **Grievance Procedures:** Colleagues may file grievances as defined in policy.
7. **Suspension and Dismissal or Assignment and Transfer Policies:** When documented attempts for corrective action in regards to personal conduct fail to improve the

professional standards for an employee, the procedures outlined in these policies will be implemented as a last resort.

Legal References

IC § 33-1208	Teachers - Revocation, Suspension, Denial, or Place Reasonable Conditions on Certificate — Grounds
IC § 33-1209	Teachers - Proceedings to Revoke, Suspend or Deny or Place Reasonable Conditions on a Certificate
IDAPA 08.02.02.076	Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators

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