STAFF CONDUCT

A fundamental objective of education and an indication of the educated person is an ability to achieve and maintain self-control. The use of indiscreet, foul, or abusive language, or actions or language that is sexually implicit and/or explicit, in the presence of students, staff, parents, or community members whether before a group, singly, in public or private, is considered unnecessary and improper for any and all school personnel. As representatives of the school district, appropriate behavior is expected at all times. On occasions where the use of indiscreet, abusive, and/or foul language is brought to the attention of administrators, it is to be discussed with the personnel involved. A verbal warning is to be noted in personnel records. A second warning is to take the form of a written statement and include as notification that a future incident of a like nature will be cause for dismissal as conduct unbecoming a mature and ethical adult serving the interest of the school district.

The repeated use of language or expressions unacceptable by contemporary community standards, as determined by the Salem School Board or its representatives, is considered indiscreet language unbecoming to an adult dealing with public school children of the school district. Consistent reporting of such conduct from parents shall be considered as evidence that such conduct does exist.

The school district endeavors to keep attendance of employees at a maximum. Although unavoidable and inevitable absences will occur, they should be at a minimum.

The school district reserves the right to refuse authorization of an absence even though the request was made in advance, to investigate an absence, and to deny pay allowance for an absence that is deemed unnecessary.

The employee has an obligation and responsibility to notify the proper supervisor at the earliest moment when an unforeseen absence is to occur.

In addition to consistent attendance, district employees are expected to be prompt for assigned responsibilities.

Consistent with Policy GCNA, tardiness is to be considered a disciplinary problem to be approached through a graduated system of penalties. Tardiness caused by circumstances beyond an employee’s control may be considered excusable; however, chronic tardiness is an unacceptable habit.

School district employees are expected to set a standard of personal conduct which shall be above reproach, and which shall contribute to district and school morale. Further, they are to expect similar behavior from students and endeavor in a positive and constructive manner to attain such behavior at any time while on school property.
Staff Conduct With Students

The Salem School Board expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators and others to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their conduct with students. For the purposes of this policy, staff members also include designated volunteers as defined in Salem School Board Policy IJOC; student teachers; interns; or persons working for the district as independent contractors.

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust; an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in an educational setting; and consistent with the educational mission of the schools.

Prohibited Conduct

1. Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the School Board's discrimination and harassment policies (GBAA).

2. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal staff-student relationship.

3. For non-counseling staff, encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, staff members are expected to be supportive but to refer the student to appropriate counseling staff. In either case, staff involvement should be limited to a direct connection to the student's school performance.

4. Sexual banter, allusions, jokes or innuendoes with students.

5. Asking a student to keep a secret (except in the case of trivial matters such as a surprise party).

6. Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns or other private matters to one or more students.

7. Addressing students in an overly familiar manner.

8. Permitting students to address any staff member in any overly familiar manner.

9. Using insults or sarcasm against students as a method of forcing compliance with requirements or expectations.

Before engaging in the following activities without parents, staff members will review the activity with their building principal or supervisor, as appropriate:

1. Being alone with individual students out of public view.

2. Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home unless accompanied by the student's parent or with parental permission. This does not prohibit a teacher's children, from inviting to their home friends who may be in the parent's class or classes.
3. Visiting a student at home, unless on official school business, however this does not preclude a staff member from visiting a student's home at the parent's invitation for a social or other event.

4. Exchanging personal gifts beyond the customary student-teacher gifts.

5. Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by telephone; e-mail; Instant Messenger; internet social networking, chat rooms or other technologies; or letters beyond homework or other legitimate school business.

6. Socializing or spending time with students, including but not limited to activities such as going out for meals or movies, shopping, traveling and recreational activities, outside of school-sponsored events. (This prohibition does not extend to community activities where there may be incidental social contact with students.)

In formulating this policy, the Board understands that there are circumstances when staff members have personal relationships with the families of students outside of school. However, the Board extends a cautionary note advising against use of social networking to establish or maintain informal relationships with parents of students in their class or classes. The intent of this policy is not to prohibit all social contact between staff members and families outside of school. However, because of the trust placed in school staff by the community and our schools' responsibility to protect the well being of students, staff members are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students at all times. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct or a planned activity may constitute a violation of this policy.

**Reporting Violations**

Staff members are required to notify promptly the appropriate building administrator or superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

**Disciplinary Action**

Staff violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Human Services and in referral to law enforcement, in accordance with the School Board's policy on reporting child abuse and neglect and state law.