

GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE STAFF-STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

In order to create a safe and secure environment for students, staff are required to behave in a manner that conforms to the *Staff Conduct* policy.

Some considerations and guidelines include the following:

- Consider the child's age, developmental level, maturity and level of care required, for example, touching a child to gain their attention, guiding or comforting a distressed child.
- Work in an open environment; for example, in confidential interviews or a one-to-one meeting, the door should be open with visual access. Exceptions apply for professions with strict confidentiality requirements.
- Be alert to cues from students about how comfortable they are in your proximity and respect their need for personal space.
- Be sensitive when interacting with students who may misinterpret your actions, such as those students who may have been traumatised by abuse or adolescents seeking attention from a member of the opposite sex.
- Be aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour towards students.
- Be cautious about physical contact in games or practical instruction. If you need to make physical contact for demonstrations, explain the activity and what you will do, maintain a safe and appropriate distance.
- Physical contact should be made in a way that makes students feel comfortable, for example, shaking hands, a congratulatory pat on the back or with young children by gently guiding them or holding their hand for reassurance. Physical contact such as stroking hair or limbs, or allowing a student to sit on your lap should be developmentally appropriate and in full public view. It may be appropriate for a very young child who is distressed but can never be justified for an older student in any circumstance. Massaging a student or allowing a student to massage you is inappropriate physical contact.
- Social interaction through electronic media such as MSN, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Bebo etc. is not appropriate and may lead to misinterpretation of the student-teacher relationship.
- The use of images of students as screen savers or backgrounds on personal electronic devices is not appropriate. The collection and storage of photographs of students must be for educational purposes.
- Be aware that the giving and receiving of gifts, giving extra attention, accepting a different standard of behaviour from a child or having 'special time' with a child must be appropriate and justified as a strategy to meet teaching and learning outcomes.
- Be aware that talking about sex or making comments of a sexualised nature, when outside the sexual health curriculum is unprofessional. This behaviour may be perceived as sexual harassment, misinterpreted and or cause distress to a child.
- Obtain parental permission when meeting with students off the school grounds for outside of school activities.
- The provision of your personal contact details should be justified in terms of educational purposes.