

CSArts-SGV Appropriate Staff Interaction with Students Board Policy

The California School of the Arts - San Gabriel Valley (CSArts-SGV) Board of Trustees expects all staff members, volunteers, independent contractors, board members, and all others participating in school activities (collectively, "Staff"), to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their conduct with students. Furthering those goals, CSArts-SGV is committed to ensuring that all individuals who work with or have contact with students conduct themselves in a way that is supportive, positive, professional, and non-exploitative. Staff are role models for students, whether on or off school property and both during and outside of school hours.

All School Staff are expected to abide by a professional standard of conduct and model good citizenship for students, parents, and the community. As such, interactions between Staff 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 CSArts-SGV. Any type of sexual relationship, sexual contact or behavior considered sexual in nature between School Staff and an enrolled student is strictly prohibited. The prohibition applies to individuals of the same or opposite sex. It also applies whether or not the student initiates, welcomes or reciprocates the behavior.

Staff are expected to understand that even the appearance of an inappropriate relationship will adversely impact their effectiveness in the school environment. As such, Staff are strictly prohibited from forming social and/or personal relationships with students outside the classroom.

Prohibited Conduct

Staff members are prohibited from engaging in any of the following behaviors with students, whether on or off school property and whether on or outside of school hours. This list is not exhaustive:

- Engaging in any romantic or sexual relationship with students, including dating, flirting, sexual contact, inappropriate physical displays of affection, kissing, or sexually suggestive comments between students and staff;
- Fostering, encouraging, or participating in emotionally or socially intimate relationships with students through communication or gift-giving;
- Singling or seeking out a specific student which may create excessive emotional attachment for all parties or may be perceived as a "special relationship" or as acting in a "parental" role;
- Telling sexual jokes or commenting about the physical attractiveness of students in a sexualized manner;
- Initiating or continuing communications with students for reasons unrelated to any direct educational purpose, including oral or written communication, telephone calls, electronic communication such as texting, instant messaging, email, chat rooms, Facebook, Instagram, or other social networking sites, webcams or photographs;
- Socializing with students outside of instructional time;

- Providing alcohol or drugs (regardless of age) to students – either prescription or illegal (unless provided pursuant to the Policy on Medication Administration)
- Engaging in any conduct that endangers students, staff, or others, including, but not limited to, physical violence, threats of violence, or possession of a firearm or other weapon
- Engaging in harassing or discriminatory behavior towards students, parents/guardians, staff, or community members, or failing or refusing to intervene with an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying against a student is observed
- Possessing or viewing any pornography on school grounds, or possessing or viewing child pornography or other imagery portraying children in a sexualized manner at any time

Acceptable Guiding Principles for Staff Behavior

The Board of Trustees encourages Staff to accept as guiding principles the professional standards and codes of ethics adopted by educational or professional associations to which they may belong. In addition to those standards, Staff should be guided by the standards listed below.

1. All staff are expected to observe the individual rights and dignity of students by:

- Respecting students by taking into account their age, gender, culture, setting, and socioeconomic context;
- Communicating with students in a clear, respectful, ethical, and sensitive manner;
- Engaging in physical contact with students only when there is a clearly defined purpose that benefits the student and continually keeps the safety and well-being of the student in mind;
- Considering the ramifications of continuing relationship of any kind with a former student, including but not limited to, any potential harm to the former student, public perception, and the possible impact on the educator's career.

2. All staff shall demonstrate an ethic and obligation of care through:

- Establishing and maintaining an environment that promotes the emotional, intellectual, and physical safety of all students;
- Seeking to understand student educational, academic, personal, and social needs as well as student values, beliefs, and cultural background;
- Respecting the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual student including, but not limited to, actual and perceived gender, gender expression, gender identity, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and culture;
- Following all responsibilities of a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse.

3. All staff shall model appropriate digital/cyber/electronic citizenship by using technology and electronic means of communication that promote learning, increase access to learning, and keep students safe by:

- Following all CSArts-SGV policies and guidelines for the use of technology, social media, email, texting, messaging, etc.;

- Using only CSArts-SGV sponsored and approved platforms to communicate with students;
- Communicating with groups of students and individual students in a transparent manner that demonstrably supports the educational mission and serves a legitimate educational purpose;
- Avoiding one-to-one communication with students to the degree possible that can lead to misconduct and the appearance of impropriety, or that reasonably gives the perception that such communication does not have a legitimate educational purpose directly related to the job duties of the employee;
- Respecting the privacy of students and the need to protect the privacy of student information obtained in the course of professional practice;
- Upholding parents'/guardians' legal rights, as well as any legal requirements to reveal information related to legitimate concerns for the well-being of a student;
- Protecting the confidentiality of student records and releasing personal data in accordance with prescribed state and federal laws and local policies.

Reporting Procedures

Any person with knowledge or suspicion of an improper relationship between student and Staff must immediately report the conduct to school administration. Anonymous complaints of inappropriate fraternization by Staff with students will be investigated. Allegations of inappropriate staff-student behavior shall be promptly investigated and will be treated as confidential and private to the extent possible within legal constraints. Staff, students, and witnesses who make a good-faith report of a suspected inappropriate Staff-student relations violations, or who cooperate in inquiries or investigations related to the investigation of such a report, shall be protected from retaliation.