

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

1 The Loudoun County School Board expects all staff, as public employees, to
2 recognize that they are in a position of public trust and are held to the highest standard of
3 personal and professional conduct, serving as role models, influencing and shaping young
4 lives, and representing the school division. It is the policy of the School Board to promote
5 and foster work and educational environments that demonstrate the principles of respect,
6 professionalism, civility, and inclusivity.

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8 As stewards of the school division, employees are expected to convey these
9 principles to students, parents, colleagues, and the school community through their actions
10 and day-to-day activities during and after school or work hours, whether on or off school
11 board property, including the property of any school, office, or facility. As public employees,
12 it is important that employees are mindful of the potential impact of their behaviors and
13 actions that occur outside of their job responsibilities and work hours.

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15 A. Expectation of Professionalism. Employees are expected to perform all
16 assigned job duties in accordance with performance standards and job-specific
17 requirements (to include attendance-related policies, procedures, and guidelines).
18 Employees are expected to conduct themselves professionally, to treat all individuals with
19 dignity, respect, and civility, and to demonstrate a commitment to an inclusive, safe and
20 supportive work and educational environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds
21 work together to pursue the shared mission of the school division. Unacceptable behavior
22 includes but is not limited to:

- 23
24 1. Bullying behavior against staff or students as defined in School Board
25 Policy 7014 (Environments Free From Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse) and School
26 Board Policy 8250 (Bullying Prevention and Education);
- 27 2. Acts of physical violence or threats of violence or harm towards others;
- 28 3. Theft of any kind;
- 29 4. Shouting, yelling, or raising one's voice in a hostile, angry, or
30 threatening manner;
- 31 5. Intentionally damaging school board or privately-owned property, or
32 acts of negligence that result in damage to property;
- 33 6. Disrespectful, discourteous, uncivil, disparaging, or demeaning words,
34 gestures or actions;
- 35 7. Using, selling, dispensing, possessing, manufacturing, or being under
36 the influence of illegal drugs and narcotics or alcohol as defined in School Board Policy 7550
37 (Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace); or
- 38 8. Failure to adhere to School Board policies and regulations, state and
39 federal laws and regulations, and school- or department-based procedures and guidelines.

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41 B. Commitment to Equitable Treatment. The Loudoun County School Board is
42 committed to an equitable and inclusive work and educational environment for employees
43 and students. As outlined in the Superintendent's Statement on Equity, Loudoun County
44 Public Schools reject racist and other racially motivated behavior and language, recognizing

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45 that it encourages discrimination, hatred, oppression, and violence. Employees are expected
46 to support the school division's commitment to action-oriented equity practices through the
47 performance of their job duties, as the Division engages in the disruption and dismantling of
48 white supremacy, systemic racism, and language and actions motivated by race, religion,
49 country of origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or ability. Behavior that will not be
50 tolerated includes but is not limited to:

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52 1. Harassing or discriminatory comments or conduct including speech or
53 other telephone, electronic, or social media communication that:

54 a. is motivated in whole or in part by a bias against an individual's
55 race, national origin, ancestry, color, sex, sexual orientation, perceived
56 sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth or related
57 medical conditions, marital status, age, religion, disability, genetic
58 information, or veteran status; or

59 b. can reasonably be interpreted as discriminatory, racially or
60 ethnically derogatory, defamatory, or as undermining the views,
61 positions, goals, policies or public statements of the Loudoun County
62 School Board or its Superintendent when such comments or conduct
63 create the reasonable apprehension of a disruption or disrupt the
64 operations or efficiency of LCPS.

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66 2. Use of racial insults or slurs regardless of intent. For example, it is
67 unacceptable to use a racial insult or slur in responding to or addressing a situation in which
68 an individual has used a racial insult or slur.

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70 3. Any comments or actions that are not in alignment with the school
71 division's commitment to action-oriented equity practices, and which impact an individual's
72 ability to perform their job responsibilities or create a breach in the trust bestowed upon
73 them as an employee of the school division. This includes on-campus and off-campus
74 speech, social media posts, and any other telephonic or electronic communication.

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76 C. Recognition of Appropriate Employee-Student Boundaries. Employees are
77 expected to establish and maintain appropriate physical, social and emotional boundaries
78 with students. Unacceptable behavior includes but is not limited to:

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80 1. Grooming, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Abuse. Grooming is a
81 method used by adults that involves building trust and/or attempting to build trust with
82 children and/or adults for the purpose of developing an inappropriate relationship.
83 Grooming, sexual misconduct, and sexual abuse are egregious breaches of an educator's
84 professionalism and duty to protect children and are strictly prohibited.

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86 a. Per School Board Policy 7530 (Duty to Report Child Abuse and
87 Neglect), allegations of behaviors that constitute grooming, sexual
88 misconduct, or other forms of abuse or neglect must be reported to

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89 Child Protective Services (or Adult Protective Services, as applicable)
90 and appropriate law enforcement agencies.

91 b. Behavior that violates this policy includes but is not limited to the
92 following:

93 (i) Sexual or romantic invitations to students;

94 (ii) Dating students or soliciting dates with students;

95 (iii) Engaging in sexualized dialogue with students;

96 (iv) Making suggestive comments to students or in the known
97 presence of students;

98 (v) Physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature;

99 (vi) Self-disclosure of a sexual or erotic nature to students or
100 in the known presence of students; or

101 (vii) Sexual contact or inappropriate overtures to students
102 whether they be physical, verbal, non-verbal, written or
103 electronic.

104 c. Engaging in an intimate, romantic, or sexual relationship with a
105 student after the student's graduation, combined with credible
106 allegations of engaging in grooming behaviors with the student before
107 graduation, will result in an investigation. Substantiation that such
108 grooming behaviors occurred before the student's graduation will lead
109 to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

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111 2. Inappropriate or Intimate Social Relationships and Communication. The
112 boundary of the employee-student relationship must be maintained at all times. Examples of
113 behaviors that constitute an inappropriate or intimate social relationship or communication
114 with a student include but are not limited to:

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116 a. Conversations and comments of an intimate, romantic, or sexual
117 nature;

118 b. Commentary on a student's physical appearance or clothing that
119 could reasonably be interpreted as sexual, flirtatious, or harassing;

120 c. Physical contact with students that could reasonably be
121 interpreted as sexual harassment or as having sexual or flirtatious
122 intentions;

123 d. Telephonic or electronic communication, including social media
124 contact, unrelated to school activities to include but not limited to
125 connecting with, following, or friending students via social media or
126 email accounts;

127 e. Prolonged, frequent, or private contact between an employee
128 and student during or outside school hours that is unrelated to
129 academics or school activities;

130 f. Singling out students for flirtation, friendship, or personal
131 attention beyond the bounds of the employee-student relationship;

132 g. Singling out students for receipt of gifts;

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- 133 h. Transporting students in personal vehicles without the knowledge
134 of a parent/guardian or a supervisor, outside of case-by-case approval
135 by a supervisor for an exception to transport the student in the event of
136 an emergency or unusual circumstance; or
137 i. Entering the home of a student without the knowledge of and
138 presence of a parent/guardian.

139
140 All forms of contact and communication with students must be transparent,
141 accessible to supervisors and parents, nonsexual, unambiguous in meaning, and
142 professional in reference and content. If an employee feels that a student is contacting or
143 engaging with them inappropriately or that the student is attempting to blur the line of their
144 relationship, the employee will seek immediate guidance from their supervisor.

145
146 D. Duty To Report. Employees with supervisory responsibilities are expected to
147 encourage professional, respectful, civil, equitable, and inclusive work and educational
148 environments for employees and students, and to address issues of unprofessionalism.
149 Employees who feel they have been subjected to conduct that may violate the expectations
150 outlined within this policy, or who have witnessed such conduct, should notify their supervisor
151 immediately. Students who feel they have been subjected to conduct that may violate the
152 expectations outlined in this policy, or who feel they have witnessed such conduct, should
153 notify a building administrator, school counselor, or the Department of Instruction's School
154 Administration Office.

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156 1. If the concern is about the employee's supervisor, the employee will
157 report the complaint to the supervisor's supervisor, department head, or the Department of
158 Human Resources and Talent Development.

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160 2. Employees must also ensure they are following reporting requirements
161 outlined in other relevant School Board policies to include but not limited to School Board
162 Policy 7530 (Duty to Report Child or Student Abuse and Neglect) and School Board Policy
163 7550 (Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace). Any employee who becomes aware of sexual
164 harassment by any means is obligated to immediately report it to their supervisor who will, in
165 turn, report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. Failure to follow reporting requirements is
166 considered a violation of this policy.

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168 3. Employees are also encouraged to report violations of LCPS's
169 commitment to equitable treatment of students and staff to their immediate supervisor or
170 principal.

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172 E. Protected Speech. Nothing in this policy or any other policy shall be interpreted
173 as abridging an employee's First Amendment right to engage in protected speech, however,
174 based upon an individualized inquiry, speech, including but not limited to via social media,
175 on matters of public concern may be outweighed by the school division's interest in the
176 following:

- 177 1. Maintaining efficiency of the school system;

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- 178 2. Preventing disruption or a reasonable apprehension of a disruption of
179 the learning and working environment;
180 3. Maintaining public trust and confidence at all times;
181 4. Fostering close personal relationships among and between staff and
182 parents;
183 5. Promoting internal LCPS and external community harmony and peace;
184 and
185 6. Establishing and maintaining a tranquil learning and working
186 environment.
187 7. Achieving consistent application of the Board's and Superintendent's
188 stated mission, goals, policies and directives, including protected class equity, racial equity,
189 and the goal to root out systemic racism.

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191 F. Provision Against Retaliation. Employees are prohibited from retaliating against
192 an individual for raising concerns of potential violations of this policy. Individuals who
193 knowingly make false complaints under this policy are subject to disciplinary action.
194 Reasonable, good faith beliefs that this policy has been violated will not result in discipline if
195 the concerns raised are later proven untrue.

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200 Adopted: 10/10/72
201 Revised: 6/22/93, 4/26/16
202 Current Revision: xx/xx/xx

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207 Legal Refs: § 22.1-291.4, § 1-276.01

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209 Cross Refs: Policy 7014, Environments Free From Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse,
210 Policy 7016, Employment Complaints, Policy 7312, Evaluation of Licensed, Classified, and
211 Administrative Staff, Policy 7530, Duty to Report Child Abuse and Neglect, Policy 7550 Drug-
212 and Alcohol-Free Workplace, Policy 8250, Bullying Prevention and Education, Duty to Report
213 Sexual Harassment as provided by Title IX Regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 106.