

STEVENSON

The Stevenson School Code of Ethical Conduct for Employees in Relation to Students

Stevenson's Code of Ethical Conduct is intended to provide guidance to all members of the Stevenson community regarding appropriate interactions between adults and students. Although it is not an exhaustive list of expectations and prohibited behavior, it should serve as a reminder that the actions of employees should at all times be above reproach, governed by common sense, and taken with the best interests of the students and Stevenson in mind.

General Principles

As adults employed within this learning and teaching community, employees must recognize that employees have responsibilities and duties of care for our students. Employees are required to understand and accept fully the trust placed in them by Stevenson students and their families. Employees must recognize that learning and growth occur best when trust and a sense of security are systemic within the Stevenson community.

In situations that raise concerns about the wellbeing or safety of any member of our community, including employees and students, it is each employee's responsibility to utilize the available resources of Stevenson to address the situation urgently.

In light of the above:

1. Employees must promote a culture of dignity and respect within the Stevenson community;
2. Employees are required to nurture the wellbeing and safety of Stevenson's students at all times, always to be focused on these interests, and ready to act on them;
3. Employees acknowledge that the inherent imbalance of power in employees' relationships with students requires all employees to maintain healthy boundaries in our interactions with students. Employees' behavior must adhere to those sections of the Employee Benefits, Policies, and Procedures, especially but not only those policies that address the prohibition on all forms of sexual or romantic contact with students.
4. In the verbal domain, employees are required to observe appropriate boundaries in spoken and written language and symbolic communication (images, emoticons, emojis, drawings, etc.), including all forms of virtual or electronic communication. Employees are required to comply within this last regard, and uphold the specific clauses of Stevenson's Acceptable Use Policy that refer specifically to electronic communication.

Stevenson's employees must maintain professional relationships with students both on and off the campus at all times. Professional relationships between Stevenson employees and students are beneficial, and Stevenson encourages employees and faculty members to strive to make a real difference in the lives of their students by cultivating such relationships. As a matter of sound judgment and professional ethics, however, Stevenson employees have a responsibility to avoid any apparent or actual conflict between their professional responsibilities and personal relationships with students. In light of this responsibility and

commitment, the following rules have been developed regarding interactions between faculty and students and the educational process:

- Employees and faculty are not permitted to initiate or accept personal social network relationship requests with current students or former students/alumni under the age of 18 and must use professional discretion when social networking with alumni 18 and over.
- Employees and faculty may not contribute to or be present with students in any situation where civil law and/or school rules are violated.
- Students must be viewed as the “restricted individuals” they are, that is, they are not independent and they are not adults. Wherever students are and whatever they do should be with the explicit knowledge of the parents or guardian. Students are not adults and are not permitted independent decisions. All involvements/interactions with students should be approached from this premise.
- Caution and professional demeanor, language, and conduct are to be observed in all interactions with students.
- Students are never allowed to go to an employee or faculty member’s off-campus home unless it is a school-sponsored or school-related event and unless approved in advance by the Head of the Upper Division or the Head of the Lower and Middle Divisions.
- Transporting students in privately owned vehicles to school-sponsored or school-related events is strictly prohibited unless approved in advance by the Human Resources Director.
- Student trips must have a sufficient number of adult chaperones to preclude the appearance of inappropriate personal involvement with students.
- Games or sports activities with students should be engaged in only in the presence of others, or in a place openly accessible/visible to others.
- An employee or faculty member may not date a student or engage in any personal or romantic relationship. A breach of this rule will result in immediate dismissal.
- Employees and faculty members must avoid assuming the role of a “father or mother figure,” which tends to create an excessive emotional attachment for all parties.
- Employees and faculty members must never misuse or exploit their authority in their dealings with students.
- When a faculty or staff member is in a room with a student, the door should remain open, or there should be clear visibility through the door windows.
- Discussions of a sexual nature must always take place in an appropriate educational context. Sexual jokes, slang or innuendo must be avoided when interacting with students. See Stevenson School’s Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Policy, section 9.1 in the Employee Benefits, Policies, and Procedures.
- Topics or vocabulary, which could not comfortably be used in the presence of parents, shall not be used with students.
- Alcohol shall not be consumed in the presence of students, unless the President or division head has authorized its use at a School-sponsored event, nor should alcohol be used irresponsibly prior to attending School events. See Stevenson School’s Drug Free Workplace Policy, section 10.2. in the Employee Benefits, Policies, and Procedures
- Employees and faculty members must respect the physical boundaries of their students. Students must never be touched punitively, nor should they be touched in any way that could be construed as inappropriately affectionate.

All employees must adhere to the rules stated in this policy. Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees should at all times act in accordance with the General Principles stated in The Stevenson School Code of Ethical Conduct for Employees in Relation to Students above. It is not possible to create an exhaustive list of standards for behavior to cover every potential situation involving conduct with students. The following are examples of behavioral standards to help guide employees when engaging with students:

When interacting with students, whether in person or otherwise, employees must at all times:

1. Be alert to the imbalance of power that exists in relationships between adults and students and never abuse it. This imbalance can continue after the student has graduated from Stevenson.
2. Establish and maintain healthy boundaries with students and refrain from any conduct that places the interests of the employee or other adults ahead of the student's interests.
3. Conduct themselves as role models for the students.
4. Operate in a manner consistent with Stevenson's mission and which reflects well on the School.
5. Set appropriate limits with students and encourage their growth, learning, and autonomy.
6. Refer students in need of counseling or other health services or attention to the appropriate professional.

The following conduct by employees is prohibited:

- Any sexual, romantic or dating relationship with students; any activity with students that could be considered sexual or romantic in nature; or any sexual, romantic or unduly familiar behavior or communications (including inappropriate personal stories and history) with students whether in person or indirectly through the use of email, telephone, social networking or other media.
- Engaging in, participating in or condoning in any way the use of alcohol or illegal drugs by students.
- Sharing or disclosing any information concerning a student, other than on a need to know basis, to any person not specifically authorized to receive such information. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning educational assessments, test scores, grades, behavior, mental or physical health, and family background or finances.

Compliance

Compliance with the Code of Ethical Conduct, and the expectations and policies contained in the Stevenson School Employee Benefits, Policies and Procedures is a condition of employment. Employees who fail to comply with the Code of Ethical Conduct shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

It is the duty of every member of the School community to report any and all instances of suspected violation of the Code of Ethical Conduct. Such reports should be promptly made

directly to the Community Conduct Council, or a member of it, or to the Chief Financial Officer, the Human Resources Director, the Head of the Upper Division or the Head of the Elementary and Middle Divisions, or the President verbally or in writing. Employees should not hesitate to raise questions about whether conduct or concerns regarding the appropriateness of behavior should be reported directly to the Community Conduct Council.

Reports or complaints will be investigated. It is the duty of all employees and members of the community to cooperate with any investigation. Although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, every effort will be made to protect the privacy of those involved and limit the sharing of information to those who have a need to know.

Filing a false complaint, or providing false information in connection with the investigation of a complaint, may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Finally, employees and students who make good faith reports of possible inappropriate behavior or who cooperate with investigations are protected from retaliation. Any perceived retaliation should immediately be brought to the attention of the Community Conduct Council or to the Chief Financial Officer, the Human Resources Director, the Head of the Upper Division or the Head of the Elementary and Middle Divisions, or the President. Any individual found to have retaliated against someone for reporting a perceived violation of this policy, or participating in an investigation, may be subject to discipline.