

Lawrence Public Schools

Code of Conduct

Staff Ethics

The School Committee expects members of its professional staff to be familiar with the code of ethics that applies to their profession and to adhere to it in their relationships with students, parents, coworkers and officials of the Lawrence Public Schools.

No employee of the Committee will engage in or have a financial interest in, directly or indirectly, any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with his/her duties and responsibilities in the school system. Nor will any staff member engage in any type of private business during school time or on school property.

Employees will not engage in work of any type where information concerning customer, client, or employer originates from any information available to them through school sources.

Moreover, as there should be no conflict of interest in the supervision and evaluation of employees, at no time may any administrator responsible for the supervision and/or evaluation of an employee be directly related to him/her.

In order to avoid the appearance of any possible conflict, it is the opinion of the School Committee that employment of more than one individual from the same immediate family may not be in the best interest of the school district. Therefore the Committee establishes as policy that appointments forthcoming from the Superintendent of Schools that would result in multiple employments (within the school district) of members of the same immediate family should be avoided. Immediate family is defined as spouse, father, mother, brother, sister or child. Further, it is the policy of the School Committee that no employee be hired who is related to any member of the School Committee.

In cases where the situation results after initial employment, no employee shall be placed in any position where the direct administration or supervisory authority over the position is exercised by a spouse or relative of that employee.

The School Committee's various policies relating to conflict of interest will be made known to all staff members.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:30, 71:37H, 71:52; 71:67; 268A

Staff Conduct

All staff members have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with and abide by the laws of the Commonwealth as these affect their work, the policies of the School Committee, and the regulations designed to implement them.

In the area of personal conduct, the Committee expects that teachers and others will conduct themselves in a manner that not only reflects credit to the Lawrence Public Schools but also sets forth a model worthy of emulation by students.

All staff members will be expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern.

Essential to the success of ongoing school operations and the instructional program are the following specific responsibilities, which will be required of all personnel:

- 1) Faithfulness and promptness in attendance at work;
- 2) Support and enforcement of policies of the Committee and their implementing regulations and school rules in regard to students;
- 3) Diligence in submitting required reports promptly at the times specified;
- 4) Care and protection of school property; and
- 5) Concern for and attention to their own and the Lawrence Public School's legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of students, including the need to ensure that students are under supervision at all times.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:37H; 264:11; 264:14

Teacher-Student Relations

The School Committee accepts the principle that the relationship between teacher and student should be one of cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect. As the director of learning experiences within the classroom and school environment, as well as within the community, the teacher is expected to exercise good interpersonal relationships with the students, to accept each as an individual, and to extend a feeling of friendship and respect to all.

This must be done exercising good and sound judgment and appropriate behavior. For example, teachers must not engage in conduct unbecoming a teacher or adult.

Taking a sincere and appropriate professional interest in an individual student can be commendable in appropriate circumstances, provided partiality and the appearance of partiality are avoided. The teacher who inspires, guides, and helps can have lasting influence on students throughout their lives. But such teacher-pupil relationships must be on an appropriate teacher-pupil basis.

Inappropriate and/or excessive formal or informal social or other involvement with individual students and “pal-like” relationships give rise to charges and concerns of excessive and inappropriate personal involvement and unethical conduct. Such conduct is not compatible with professional teacher ethics and appropriate teacher conduct and shall not be condoned. Such conduct will result in appropriate disciplinary and/or other administrative action, including but not limited to suspension, administrative leave, demotion and termination. It is not the policy of the Town of Lawrence to have or permit such a custom, policy or practice.

As an example, and by no means the only prohibited conduct, teachers are specifically prohibited from taking students or being in the company of such students on day-trips, overnight or out-of-state school or non-school trips without the express written consent of parents/guardians. In all situations involving students, especially situations outside of the classroom or school environment, teachers must be aware of and respect, where appropriate, the desires and concerns of both parents and/or guardians of a student. Teachers must be cognizant of the role they play in society and how their presence at an event or activity may reflect on themselves, the School District and the teaching profession.

Staff Qualifications

Qualifications: All instructional personnel (which shall be defined to include all teaching, administrative, and supervisory personnel) shall qualify under the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (hereafter referred to as the General Laws) and such other standards that the School Committee shall set.

Certifications: In accordance with the Massachusetts Law, all persons holding positions for which certification is required shall be properly certified except as allowed by law.

Character and Attitudes: All instructional personnel shall be expected to possess the following characteristics:

- High moral character;
- Respect for the American heritage and an appreciation for our democratic way of life;
- Genuine interest in children and youth and the progress of each individual; and
- Devotion to the profession of education, springing from recognition of its vital place in developing responsible citizens.