

## **RENAISSANCE ARTS ACADEMY STAFF/STUDENT INTERACTION POLICY**

In recognition of power differences between staff and students, no matter what the age difference may be, Renaissance Arts Academy recognizes its responsibility develop regulations governing student and staff behavior to ensure the safest and most effective learning environment possible. In RenArts' schoolwide open classroom, all on-site interaction between staff and students is by design public and transparent. In keeping with RenArts' physical and curricular structure, all in-school and out-of-school communication, contact, artistic engagement, and other interactions between staff members and students should be purposefully open, transparent, and cognizant of the high degree of trust placed in school staff by the administration, students, families and community.

It is the purpose of this policy to provide guidance to understanding and following to the standards of conduct embodied in RenArts' ethics-related rules and regulations to help staff understand the appropriate behavior boundaries incumbent upon them.

### **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student.

### **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

For purposes of this policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons, or to prevent damage to property. For clarification purposes, the following examples are offered for direction and guidance of School personnel:

Examples of PERMITTED actions include:

1. Stopping a student from fighting with another student;
2. Preventing a pupil from committing an act of vandalism;
3. Defending yourself from physical injury or assault by a student;
4. Forcing a pupil to give up a weapon or dangerous object;
5. Strenuous physical training activities designed to strengthen, condition, improve coordination, agility, or physical skills;
6. Group calisthenics, exercises, rehearsals, or other voluntary physical activities.

### **STAFF/STUDENT INTERACTION**

#### **A. Purpose and Scope**

The rules of conduct set forth in this policy are not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of requirements, limitations, or prohibitions on staff conduct and activities established by School. Rather, they are intended to:

- (1) Alert staff to some of the more sensitive and often problematic matters involved in faculty/staff-student relationships;
- (2) Specify boundaries related to potentially sexual situations and conduct that is contrary to accepted norms of behavior and in conflict with duties and responsibilities of staff; and
- (3) Provide staff with clear guidance in conducting themselves in a manner that reflects high standards of professionalism.

It is important for the School to maintain a school-wide culture in which students and staff understand their responsibility to report misconduct without fearing retaliation from students, staff, or administration. In order to prevent abuse and/or exploitation, students and staff must know that the administration will support them when they report possible misconduct. Each staff member is obligated to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents, students, colleagues, or school leaders. One helpful standard that can be quickly applied when assessing whether your conduct is appropriate is to ask yourself, “Would I be doing this if the student’s family or my colleagues or family were standing next to me?”

B. Boundaries

For the purposes of this policy, the term “boundaries” is defined as acceptable professional behavior by staff members while interacting with a student. Trespassing the boundaries of a student/teacher relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

C. Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member’s perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parent point of view. The objective of this policy is not to restrain positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct. Staff must understand their own responsibility for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Although good-natured, heartfelt interaction with students certainly fosters learning, student/staff interactions must always be guided by appropriate boundaries regarding activities, locations, communications, and intentions.

Staff members are expected to be circumspect in all interactions with students, avoiding questionable behaviors such as:

- (a) Giving gifts of a personal and intimate nature.
- (b) Unnecessary physical contact with a student in public or private.
- (d) Intentionally being alone with a student on campus or away from the school.
- (e) Making, or participating in sexually inappropriate comments.
- (f) Sexual jokes, or jokes/comments with sexual innuendos.
- (g) Seeking emotional involvement with a student for your benefit.
- (h) Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student in an attempt to gain their support and understanding.
- (j) Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.

If staff members have legitimate cause for any of the following types of interactions with students, directors should be notified so that potential impact on the school, other students, and other staff members can be assessed in advance and alternative arrangements can be pursued if deemed advisable:

- (a) Giving students a ride to/from school or outside activities.

- (b) Being alone in a schoolroom with a student unless visible through glass door/window.
- (c) Allowing students in your home.
- (d) Sending emails, text messages, letters, or other forms of communication to students if the content is not about school activities.

**DUTY TO REPORT**

When any employee becomes aware of another staff member crossing the boundaries specified in this policy, he/she must report the matter immediately to the School directors. Reports will be kept confidential. It is the duty of the School administration to thoroughly investigate and remediate the situation as necessary. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness or concern of student behavior that crosses appropriate boundaries, or where a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse.

**OFF-DUTY CONDUCT**

While RenArts does not seek to interfere with the off-duty personal conduct of its employees, types of off-duty conduct may interfere with the best interests of RenArts' faculty, students, parents and/or other stakeholders. For this reason, employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not adversely affect the integrity, reputation or credibility of the school. Illegal or immoral off-duty conduct by a school employee that adversely affects the RenArts' community or the employee's ability to perform his/ her duties may lead to disciplinary action including possible termination of employment. Please bear in mind that text, photo, video, etc. evidence of inappropriate conduct that is electronically transmitted or posted on internet networking sites may end up being publicly accessible by students or other members of the school community.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

RenArts' employees are responsible for safeguarding all personal, confidential and school-related information obtained during the course of employment, including FERPA-defined student records, and other information regarding students, parents, fellow employees, and school business. Employees have a responsibility to prevent revealing or divulging confidential school information except as necessary in the performance of assigned duties. Access to confidential information is on a "need-to-know" basis and must be authorized by your supervisor. Breach of this policy may result in legal action.

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*I understand and agree to abide by the RenArts Staff and Student Interaction Policy.*

**Employee Name (please print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_