

## **Policy 423     EMPLOYEE-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS**

### **I.     PURPOSE**

Northfield Public Schools is committed to an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. Every school district employee is to provide students with appropriate guidance, understanding and direction, while maintaining a standard of professionalism, and acting within accepted standards of conduct.

### **II.    GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

- A.    This policy applies to all district employees at all times, whether on or off duty and on or off of school district locations.
- B.    At all times, students will be treated by teachers and other district employees with respect, courtesy and consideration and in a professional manner. Each district employee is expected to exercise good judgment and professionalism in all interpersonal relationships with students. Such relationships must be and remain on a teacher-student basis or an employee-student basis.
- C.    Teachers must be mindful of their inherent positions of authority and influence over students. Similarly, other district employees also may hold positions of authority over students of the district and must be mindful of their authority and influence over students.
- D.    Sexual relationships between district employees and students, without regard to the age of the student, are strictly forbidden and may subject the employee to criminal liability as well as disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.
- E.    Other actions that violate this policy include, but are not limited to:
  - 1.    Dating students.
  - 2.    Having any interaction/activity of a sexual nature with a student.
  - 3.    Committing or attempting to induce students or others to commit an illegal act or act of immoral conduct which may be harmful to others or bring discredit to the school district.
  - 4.    Supplying alcohol or any illegal substance to a student, allowing a student access to such substances, or failing to take reasonable steps to prevent such access from occurring.
- F.    District employees shall, whenever possible, employ safeguards against improper relationships with students and/or claims of such improper relationships.
- G.    Excessive informal and social involvement with individual students is unprofessional, is not compatible with employee-student relationships, and is inappropriate.
- H.    District employees will adhere to applicable standards of ethics and professional conduct in Minnesota law.

### **III. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION**

- A. Complaints and/or concerns regarding alleged violations of this policy shall be handled by the superintendent or their designee unless other specific complaint procedures are provided within any other policy of the district.
- B. All employees shall cooperate with any investigation of alleged acts, conduct or communications in violation of this policy.

### **IV. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION**

Upon receipt of a report, the district will take appropriate action. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. It also may include reporting to appropriate state or federal authorities, including the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board or the appropriate licensing authority and appropriate agencies responsible for investigating reports of maltreatment of minors and/or vulnerable adults. School district action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, Minnesota and federal law, and district policies.

### **V. SCOPE OF LIABILITY**

Employees are placed on notice that if an employee acts outside the performance of the duties of the position for which the employee is employed, or is guilty of malfeasance, willful neglect of duty, or bad faith, the school district is not required to defend and indemnify the employee for damages in school-related litigation.

#### **Policy 423 Employee Student Relationships**

Adopted: 03.14.2005; Updated: 12.2014, 04.14.2025; Non-Substantive Update: 12.17.2020, 02.08.2022

Board of Education

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 659

Northfield, Minnesota

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. §13.43, Subd. 16 (Personnel Data)  
Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, Subd. 2 (Suspension or Revocation of Licenses)  
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subds. 5(b) and 13 (b) (Employment; Contracts; Termination)  
Minn. Stat. §§ 609.341–609.352 (Definitions)  
Minn. Stat. Ch. 260E (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)  
Minn. Stat. § 626.557 (Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults)  
Minn. Rules Part 3512.5200 (Code of Ethics for School Administrators)  
Minn. Rules Part 8710.2100 (Code of Ethics for Minnesota Teachers)

**Cross References:** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 103 (Complaints-Students, Employees, Parents, Other Persons)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 211 (Criminal or Civil Action Against School District, School Board Member, Employee or Student)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 306 (Administrator Code of Ethics)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 403 (Discipline, Suspension and Dismissal of School District Employees)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 414 (Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 415 (Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 421 (Gifts to Employees and School Board Members)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 507 (Corporal Punishment)