Employee/Student Relations Policy

The School encourages close, warm relationships between students and teachers. At the same time, it is important employees maintain appropriate boundaries between themselves and students to ensure they avoid even the perception of inappropriate conduct.

While many activities may seem innocent from an employee’s perspective, some can be perceived as flirtatious or inappropriate from the perspective of a student or parent. The objective of this policy is not to discourage positive relationships between employees and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, misconduct. Employees are responsible for maintaining appropriate, respectful, and professional relationships with students at all times.

Faculty and staff should get to know students in a professional manner and avoid placing themselves in a compromising position. If the boundaries become unclear, School employees should seek counsel from a department chair, division head, or supervisor.

Prohibited harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behavior based on an individual’s sex, race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, physical or mental disability, or physical appearance:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes, slurs, or comments
- Visual displays and written communication, such as derogatory posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, gestures, or email messages
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement, or interfering with work
- Conduct that targets a student because of a characteristic of a friend, family member, or other person or group with whom a student associates
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment

Unacceptable Behavior includes conduct that may cross the boundaries of an appropriate relationship:

- Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal or intimate nature
- Unnecessary physical contact with a student in either a public or private situation
- Intentionally being alone with a student on campus or away from the School without parent knowledge, supervision, and/or permission
- Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments
- Sexual jokes, stories, or jokes/comments with sexual innuendo
- Seeking emotional involvement with a student for an employee’s benefit
- Discussing an employee’s own personal troubles or intimate issues with a student
- Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior
• Giving excessive attention to a particular student
• Sending emails, text messages, or letters to students of a personal nature if the content is not about school activities
• Failing to inform a parent or guardian when a significant issue develops with a student
• Using a personal, non-Buckley email to communicate with students
• Requesting or accepting current Buckley students as friends on personal social media accounts
• Consistently using profanity or swearing with students

Duty to Report: If an employee finds him or herself in a difficult situation related to boundaries, the employee should ask for advice from a supervisor or the head of school. When any employee becomes aware of another employee crossing appropriate boundaries with a student, the employee must report the matter to the head of school. In some circumstances, employees will also have the duty to report such conduct in accordance with the mandated reporter requirements.