

## EMPLOYEE CODE OF ETHICS (Attachment for Policy No. 300)

The School District of Philadelphia has a paramount vision: “The School District of Philadelphia will deliver on the right of every child in Philadelphia to an excellent public school education and ensure all children graduate from high school ready to succeed.” To make this ambitious vision a reality, all District employees (collectively referred to as “we,” “us” or “employees” throughout this document) must pursue excellence in everything we do, with the understanding that our highest priority is educating and developing students. Further, because we are public servants entrusted with a critical mission, we must build and preserve public confidence by performing our roles with integrity and ethics.

### Key Ethical Principles

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to describe these high-level ethical principles that must govern us in performing our roles:

1. Conduct activities in full compliance with the law, this Code and District policies and procedures;
2. Interact respectfully and fairly with all co-workers, students and families;
3. Protect all confidential information;
4. Be honest and forthright;
5. Use District resources and positions only for District purposes;
6. Maintain integrity of school time and property and avoid use of District resources for inappropriate political purposes
7. Avoid even the appearance of improper influence or potential conflict of interest, paying special attention to the following:
  - a. gifts and favors,
  - b. employment of family members by the District,
  - c. spending and contracting activities,
  - d. paid work during District employment,
  - e. paid work after leaving District employment and
  - f. financial interest statements; and
8. Report any suspected improper conduct.

### Application

The remainder of this Code provides more specific practical guidance to all employees of the School District and to the School Reform Commissioners (Policy 011, Section 2(b)). Some detailed standards and examples of “do’s and don’ts” are included for the sake of clarity. But this Code is not a rule book and cannot provide a complete listing of every possible situation related to the key principles or a clear answer to every question we might have about them.

We are expected to use good judgment to satisfy the spirit of this Code of Ethics. When facing decisions, we should take these steps to get the appropriate results:

- Think about the situation at hand and whether it raises possible ethical issues;
- Refer to this Code, any governing law and District policies and procedures for guidance;
- If needed, get additional guidance from a supervisor or the General Counsel's Office; and
- Make and carry out a decision that is consistent with the guidance and reflects integrity.

We are expected to sign an acknowledgement that we have received the Code of Ethics. Employees who do not sign the acknowledgement are still bound by the duty to comply with this Code, which is mandatory for all of us.

### Enforcement

Alleged violations of this Code of Ethics are subject to investigation and employees are obligated to cooperate in investigations by providing relevant information and documentation upon request. Violations of the Code may result in administrative or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as well as referral to appropriate authorities for civil action and/or criminal prosecution. Nothing in this Code precludes application of legal rights or contractual rights under relevant collective bargaining agreements.

#### 1. *CONDUCT ACTIVITIES IN FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW, THIS CODE AND DISTRICT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*

We must perform our duties in a way that complies with all relevant federal, state and local laws and regulations, and also with all requirements set by the District through this Code and District policies and procedures (some of which provide detailed rules supporting high-level principles covered by this Code). We each need to be aware of the legal and District requirements that apply to the individual jobs we do. Some laws that relate directly to the District's educational and public service missions, and therefore apply to many of our activities, include the following:

- Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, as amended;
- Pennsylvania Public Official and Employee Ethics Act;
- Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators;
- Pennsylvania Professional Educator Discipline Act; and
- Family Educational and Privacy Rights Act.

Employees who are unsure whether certain legal or District requirements apply to them or to specific situations should ask for advice from a supervisor or the Office of General Counsel.

#### 2. *INTERACT RESPECTFULLY AND FAIRLY WITH ALL CO-WORKERS, STUDENTS AND FAMILIES*

To create a collegial workplace for ourselves and a safe and engaging learning environment for our students, we must treat others with respect and dignity. In practice, this means consistently acting, speaking and dressing professionally, and avoiding inappropriate behaviors or interactions with co-workers, students, parents and other family members.

In particular, we cannot engage in conduct or use language that could be reasonably interpreted as abusive, hostile, intimidating, coercive, discriminatory, harassing or exploitative. We cannot refer to anyone else's race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability in a negative or joking way in any job-related situation.

Dating relationships or sexual contacts of any kind between employees and students or supervisors and those whom they supervise are strictly forbidden.

We must be fair and impartial in exercising our job-related authority. In practice, this means treating co-workers, students and families equitably, without improper bias or favoritism, and applying policies and procedures consistently. This includes making all employment-related decisions in compliance with applicable equal employment opportunity laws and regulations. This also includes being objective when taking official actions affecting students or families, such as assigning grades, making formal assessments, determining eligibility for programs, providing access to classes or selecting participants in extra-curricular activities.

### *3. PROTECT ALL CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION*

We must protect confidential, private or sensitive information or records that we receive in the course of our jobs, including information or records relating to students or their families or to District staff or operations. This duty continues after we stop working with the District.

We must not disclose confidential information or records to anyone inside or outside the District except as properly authorized or required to perform our responsibilities. All disclosures must comply with applicable laws, confidentiality agreements and District policies and procedures.

We also must not use confidential information or records to advance our own or others' private interests, financial or otherwise. For example, we cannot give a friend some non-public information in order to help the friend's business succeed in a competitive bidding process for District business.

### *4. BE HONEST AND FORTHRIGHT*

We must be honest in order to earn and keep the public's trust. In practice, this means avoiding any form of fraud, falsification, misrepresentation or deception in the statements we make and the records we keep while doing our jobs. We must also be forthright and candid in providing complete, accurate and timely information to help others do their jobs.

We must not participate in or allow any form of academic cheating, including anything intended to distort grades or assessments or give students an unfair advantage on examinations or evaluations.

*5. USE DISTRICT RESOURCES AND POSITIONS ONLY FOR DISTRICT PURPOSES*

We are trusted stewards of limited public resources, so we must use the District's property and our positions only for proper District purposes. This includes spending District funds, including funds raised through allowable fund raising activities, and using District assets responsibly, in line with the District's priorities and policies. We must safeguard and account for all funds collected, including those generated through fund raising activities and all funds associated with Student Activity Funds.

We must not use or allow others to use District property (including facilities, equipment, technology, supplies and records such as mailing lists) for any unapproved or private purpose. We must comply with District policies and procedures on acceptable use of computing and internet resources.

The paid time and services of employees are assets of the District to be devoted to its business. We must not misuse District time by conducting non-District business during assigned work hours, or allowing other employees to do so. Non-District business includes attending to personal or family matters, performing or promoting services compensated by any person or entity other than the District, and campaigning or raising money for any political candidate or cause.

In addition, we must not use our positions to get a private benefit for ourselves or someone else that would not otherwise be publicly available. This includes not using our titles, badges or official letterhead, or even referring to our positions with the District, to influence matters unrelated to District business.

*6. MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF SCHOOL TIME AND PROPERTY WITH RESPECT TO POLITICAL USES*

We must remember that School District property and school time may not be used for political purposes. We must protect school buildings from being used as campaign forums, including campaign visits by elected officials and candidates for public office, including the President and Vice President of the United States.

We know that visits by elected officials and candidates for elected office serve an important educational function in that they expose students to persons and views with which they should become familiar as informed and responsible citizens who either vote now or will vote some day. We must work to make sure such visits enhance the educational experience of our students and do not become political events. See School Reform Commission Policy 321.

*7. AVOID ANY IMPROPER INFLUENCE OR POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST*

We must use independent judgment as we perform our duties for the District, handling all District matters objectively on their merits, without being affected by any improper influence or conflict of interest. A potential conflict of interest can arise whenever consideration of our own personal, family or financial interests could impact the actions we take or decisions we make while doing our jobs. Family interests include the interests of any of our "Immediate Family Members," defined in this Code of Ethics to include a

spouse, domestic partner, parent, sibling or child. Any relationship by marriage is treated the same as relationship by blood.

We must actively avoid situations that might give rise to possible conflicts between our professional responsibilities, on the one hand, and our private interests, on the other. This means that we cannot recommend, participate in or attempt to influence any District action or decision in which we have a personal, family or financial interest that is different from that of the general public. Employees are expected to inform their supervisor of potential conflict of interest as soon as it arises.

The subsections below provide high-level principles to address common situations that can create improper influence or conflicts of interest if not properly managed. Employees must also follow the detailed rules contained in the policies and procedures adopted by the District to govern these situations, including those adopted by the Office of Procurement Services for application to employees involved in procurement activities.

*A. Gifts and favors*

We must not ask for or accept any gift or favor from anyone else that is intended to influence or reward the way that we perform our responsibilities for the District. For example, we cannot receive a gift, no matter how small, given in return for a decision affecting a student's grades or a vendor's selection for a contract. We also must not give gifts or favors to other employees in order to influence or reward the way that they perform their District duties. Gifts and favors include anything of value received without payment of fair consideration. Some examples of things of value are: money, discounts not generally available to the public, loans or debt forgiveness, items, services, meals, entertainment and travel expenses.

Generally speaking, we must not accept gifts or favors with a retail value of more than \$100 during a calendar year from any single source, such as a particular person, family or organization intended to influence or reward the way that we perform our responsibilities for the District. The value limit applies to individual gifts and also to the total value of multiple gifts from the same source.

We must not permit any of our Immediate Family Members to accept or give on our behalf any gift or favor that we ourselves cannot accept or give under this Code.

*B. Employment of family members by the District*

We must not recommend or participate in any action or decision that directly or indirectly causes any of our Immediate Family Members to be hired or appointed as an employee or consultant of the District. We also must not recommend or participate in any personnel action that directly or indirectly affects an Immediate Family Member employed by the District. Examples of personnel actions include promotions, evaluations, discipline and discharge.

Immediate Family Members may work together at the same District facility or program, but may not work with each other in superior-subordinate situations. Therefore, the hiring, appointment or transfer of an employee which creates a direct or indirect supervisory relationship between Immediate Family Members is prohibited. If, despite this prohibition, a supervisory relationship comes into being between Immediate Family Members due to a promotion, then the situation must be disclosed immediately and the supervisory relationship must be discontinued within 30 days.

C. *Spending and contracting activities*

We must remove ourselves from any involvement in a decision to make an expenditure or contract valued at \$1,000 or more on behalf of the District, including Student Activity Funds, if the decision could benefit in a substantial way any of the following:

- Any for-profit or nonprofit entity in which we or our Immediate Family Members hold, have arranged or are negotiating a position as an employee, agent, officer, partner, director or trustee;
- Any entity, other than a publicly traded corporation, in which we or our Immediate Family Members have a direct or indirect investment worth \$1,000 or more;
- Any publicly traded corporation in which we or our Immediate Family Members hold a direct or indirect investment interest totaling one percent or more of the shares;
- Any real property in which we or our Immediate Family Members have a direct or indirect interest worth \$1,000 or more; or
- Any other source of income for us or our Immediate Family Members.

We also must not participate in the administration or oversight of any transaction or contract that raises a financial conflict of interest as described above.

D. *Paid work during District employment*

We must not accept any outside earned income in any situation that could reflect poorly on our character or reputation, or could be inconsistent or conflict with performance of our duties as employees. For example, a teacher may not tutor students attending the school where s/he works. Specific restrictions apply as described in District policies and procedures.

E. *Paid work after leaving District employment*

We must not negotiate or discuss the possibility of future employment with any person or organization (other than a government agency) that might benefit in a

substantial way from our official actions while employed by the District. To prevent an unfair competitive advantage to businesses hiring former employees, specific restrictions apply for a period of one year after we leave the District, as described in state and/or District policies and procedures.

F. *Statements of Financial Interest*

All employees at the level of Director or above must file an annual Statement of Financial Interest with the Office of Human Resources. The Executive Director of Human Resources may also require filing of a Statement of Financial Interest by other employees whose duties require the exercise of discretion.

8. *REPORT ANY SUSPECTED IMPROPER CONDUCT*

To maintain an ethical culture within the District, we are expected to report potentially unlawful or unethical conduct. This reporting obligation arises whenever employees have reason to believe in good faith (based on observations or other facts) that another person's conduct either:

- Conflicts with the law, this Code of Ethics or District policies or procedures;
- Raises a danger to public health or safety; or
- Poses a risk to the District's public reputation for competence and integrity.

We may fulfill our duty to report by promptly raising our concerns to any of the following:

- Any supervisor (who in turn must inform the Office of Talent of the report before initiating any investigation);
- The Office of Talent;
- The Inspector General's Office;
- The General Counsel's Office; or
- The telephone reporting line or electronic mailbox maintained by the Inspector General's Office. These options can be used to report anonymously, when reporters are not comfortable identifying themselves. The phone number is (215) 400-8477 and the email address is [inspectorgeneral@philasd.org](mailto:inspectorgeneral@philasd.org).

To create the right environment for reporting, we must not:

- Discourage anyone else from reporting suspected improper conduct;

- Threaten, harass, punish or retaliate in any way against someone who has made a good faith report of misconduct (or is believed to have done so); or
- Make any report of misconduct that is false, malicious or frivolous.

For any questions regarding the Code of Ethics, please ask your Building Supervisor/Principal or the Office of Talent at (215) 400-4600.