



Student & Staff Interaction Policy

(Excerpted From KIPP SoCal's 2020–2021 Team Member Handbook)

INTERACTION POLICY: TEAM/KIPPster PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

For the purposes of this policy, the term “KIPPster” refers to any current KIPP Student, or recent Alumni still enrolled in a KIPP program, including KIPP Through College (KTC), which extends throughout their college career. KIPP SoCal recognizes its responsibility to make and enforce all rules and regulations to bring about the safest environment possible for students, recent alumni enrolled in KIPP programs, and KIPP Team Members.

Professional Boundaries

This policy is intended to guide all team members in conducting themselves in a way that reflects the highest standards of behavior and professionalism required of school team members and to specify the boundaries between students, alumni, and team members. Trespassing the boundaries of a Team Member/KIPPster relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

All team members must carefully review this policy along with each of the examples given in the policy related to acceptable and unacceptable team member behavior (see examples section below). Although this policy gives specific, clear direction, it is each team member’s obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents, students, alumni, colleagues, or school leaders. One viable standard that can be quickly applied when you are unsure if certain conduct is acceptable is to ask yourself, “Would I be engaged in this conduct if my family or colleagues were standing next to me?”

Some activities may seem innocent from a team member’s perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation, sexual insinuation, or unprofessional from a student, alumni, or parent’s point of view. The objective of providing the examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors listed below is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between team members and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct or generally unprofessional.

Team members must understand their own responsibility for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is crucial that all team members learn this policy thoroughly and apply the lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors to their daily activities. Although sincere and competent interaction with KIPPsters certainly fosters learning, interactions with KIPPsters, including those in the KTC program must respect professional boundaries surrounding potential activities, locations, and intentions.

Duty to Report

When any team member becomes aware of another team member or adult on campus having engaged in unacceptable behaviors as specified in this policy or behaviors regarding professional boundaries otherwise causing suspicion, he or she must immediately report the matter to the school administrator and/or to the Human Resources Team. All reports shall be held as confidential as possible under the circumstances. It is the duty of the Human Resources Team to investigate and thoroughly report the situation.

Use of Electronic Media by Team Members to Communicate with KIPPsters

Any communication by a KIPP team member with KIPPsters -- including through the use of electronic

media or technology -- should always be limited to school business and maintain a strictly professional tone. Please see KIPP's Policy for Team Members Use of Social Media for additional guidance.

Examples

The following examples are not intended to be all-inclusive.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviors (Violations of This Policy)

- a) Giving gifts to a KIPPster that are of a personal and intimate nature.
- b) Excessive communications (i.e. phone calls, text messages, emails, social media messaging, etc.) with KIPPsters regarding things not associated with their school work or activities and without parent/guardian's consent.
- c) Kissing of any kind.
- d) Any type of unnecessary team member-initiated physical contact with a KIPPster
- e) Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments.
- f) Sexual jokes.
- g) Seeking emotional involvement with a KIPPster for your benefit.
- h) Telling stories that are sexually oriented.
- i) Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a KIPPster in an attempt to gain their support and understanding.
- j) Remarks about the physical attributes or development of anyone.
- k) Becoming involved with a KIPPster so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.
- l) Having KIPPsters over to your residence.
- m) Providing any treatment that could be viewed as preferential or unprofessional (buying lunches, special privileges, etc.)

Examples of Acceptable and Recommended Behaviors

- a) Obtaining signed parental consent and written approval from the school leader are required for any non-sponsored after school activity.
- b) Obtaining formal approval to take KIPPsters off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
- c) E-mails, text, phone and instant messages to KIPPsters must be very professional and pertaining to school activities or classes. Parents or guardians should be copied on all communications via email, text or instant message to KIPPsters.
- d) Keeping the door open when alone with a KIPPster.
- e) Keeping reasonable space between you and a KIPPster.
- f) Stopping and correcting a KIPPster if they cross your own personal boundaries.
- g) Asking for advice from administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries.
- h) Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with a KIPPster.
- i) Informing your principal about situations that have the potential to become more severe.
- j) Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later.
- k) Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of KIPPsters or coworkers.
- l) Giving KIPPsters praise and recognition without touching them.
- m) Pats on the back, fist bumps, high fives and handshakes are acceptable.
- n) Keeping your professional conduct a high priority.