The board reaffirms one of the oldest beliefs in education, which is that one of the best methods of instruction is that of setting a good example.

The board expects the district’s employees to strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior and subsequently contribute to an appropriate school atmosphere.

To that end, all employees should recognize that they are being continuously observed by students, other employees, parents/legal guardians, and community members and that their actions and demeanor may impair their effectiveness as an employee. Consequently, employees will ensure that their dress, conduct, written and spoken communication, attitude, and interactions with others demonstrate an appropriate level of professionalism at all times.

The relationship between staff members and students in the district should be one of cooperation, understanding, mutual respect, and trust. All staff members will treat each other with respect.

The personal life of an employee, including the employee’s personal use of district issued or personal electronic equipment during or outside of working hours, (such as through social networking sites and personal portrayal on the Internet), will be the concern of and warrant the attention of the board if it impairs the employee’s ability to effectively perform his/her job responsibilities or as it violates local, state, or federal law or contractual agreements.

Such conduct warranting the attention of the board will include an employee posting any inappropriate information or images on any social networking website that results in any disruption of the educational environment or impairs the employee’s ability to be effective.

Unprofessional conduct may subject the employee to disciplinary actions consistent with state law, federal law, and or board policy.

No employee will engage in immoral or criminal conduct or commit or attempt to induce students or others to commit an act or acts of immoral conduct or criminal conduct. If it appears an employee may have violated the law, the district will cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

All employees will maintain a professional relationship with students at all times, both inside and outside of school. No employee may engage in inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature with a student at any time. This includes any action or conduct communicated or performed in person, in writing, or electronically through such means as a telephone, cell phone, computer, personal data assistant, or other telecommunication device and includes text messaging, instant messaging, and social networking.
Employees will not engage in unprofessional behavior toward other employees, students, parents/legal guardians, or others. Particularly, supervisors will not treat employees under their supervision in a belittling, demeaning, or disrespectful manner, including verbal and/or written statements, especially within the hearing of students, other employees, or others. Employees will not treat students in a belittling, demeaning, or disrespectful manner, including verbal and/or written statements. Allegations of such behavior will be reported to the proper supervisory authority and the department of human resources for investigation.

Employees of the district, while on duty and in the presence of students, will not use profanity, will not use tobacco in any form, and will not consume or be under the influence of intoxicating beverages. Employees will not be involved in drug abuse or drug trafficking.

Violations of this policy will be grounds for placing an employee on administrative leave, with pay, pending an investigation and possible recommendation for termination of employment, consistent with district policy and state law.

The following list, which is not exhaustive, includes, but is not limited to, actions that are considered misconduct while on duty or on or off district property, or at any time when the conduct would disrupt the educational environment or impair the employee’s ability to be effective:

- possessing, using, selling, manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing any illegal drugs or alcohol while on duty or off district property
- being under the influence of, possessing, using, selling, manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing any illegal drugs anywhere while on duty, on or off district property
- being under the influence of, possessing, using, selling, manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing any alcohol anywhere while on duty, on or off district property, or whenever it constitutes a crime
- using physical force to discipline or redirect a student
- using unauthorized restraint techniques on a student
- fighting or deliberately harming another individual

Richland County School District Two
● committing or attempting to commit theft or fraud

● lying or providing false information

● lying or providing false information

● being absent without approval or without proper/timely notification

● refusing to follow a supervisor's instructions and directions relative to job duties and responsibilities

● neglect of duty (including, but not limited to, failure to follow a student’s Individualized Education Program or 504 Plan, leaving students unsupervised, failure to discipline with consistency and/or failure to maintain proper building or classroom discipline, failure to take appropriate affirmative action when confronted with or after witnessing a situation in which a student is at risk of abuse or mental or physical injury, and/or inability or failure to effectively plan and present an organized lesson plan)

● failing to adhere to safety and health regulations as established by state law and the district board policy

● stealing, destroying or vandalizing school property intentionally or through negligence; employees will reimburse the district for the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged or stolen property as appropriate

● using obscene language which is unsuitable in the school setting

● having any interaction/activity of a sexual nature or intent with a student

● possessing or accessing printed, photographic, or technological material inappropriate for the school setting.

● possessing weapons on school district property (unless otherwise authorized by law)

● using or removing school district property without proper authorization

● posting false information, inappropriate personal information, or images on any social networking website that results in any disruption of the educational environment or that adversely impacts the employee’s credibility or performance

● behaving in any inappropriate manner to the extent of adversely affecting the employee's ability to perform his/her work and/or disrupting the educational environment

Richland County School District Two
● using obscene language or demeaning or derogatory language which is unsuitable in the school setting

● communicating obscene visual material to a student or staff member

● any behavior, overt or covert, of a sexual nature that may constitute professional misconduct and/or is violation of law or board policy

● disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment, or other private concerns to students or other unauthorized individuals

● disclosing information concerning a student, other than directory information, to any person not authorized to receive such information

● non-counseling or non-social work staff encouraging students to confide their personal, family problems, and/or personal relationship problems; (staff should refer students to the guidance school counseling office if there is a need for counseling)

● harassment, intimidation, discrimination or bullying of a student or another employee/staff member

● inappropriately asking students to keep secrets

● inciting students or staff members to engage in illegal activity

The board understands that there are circumstances when staff members have personal relationships with the families of students outside of school. The intent of this policy is not to prohibit all social contact between staff members and families outside of school. However, because of the trust placed in staff by the community, and the district’s responsibility to protect the well-being of students, staff members are expected to avoid the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students at all times.

Staff members are encouraged to discuss concerns with their supervisor whenever they are unsure whether a particular conduct or activity may constitute a violation of this policy.

Staff members are required to notify a supervisor immediately if they become aware of a situation or behavior that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Violations of this policy by employees will be grounds for immediate suspension and possible termination of employment consistent with board policy and state law. In such cases, an employee will be informed of his/her right to any hearing or due process procedure that may be applicable under state or federal law or board policy.
Violations of this policy by other than employees including, but not limited to, contract workers, volunteers, student teachers, and interns, will be grounds for the immediate termination of the program, activity or job for which the individual is a participant.

**Arrest of an Employee**

The board delegates specific authority to the superintendent or his/her designee to take appropriate employment action with regard to an employee who has been arrested, consistent with state law. An employee must notify his/her supervisor within three days if he/she is arrested and must keep the administration apprised of the continued status of the criminal charge against him/her.

- Employees arrested for a misdemeanor offense which would indicate no danger or appearance of danger to students, co-employees, or the district will normally not be subject to any employment action.
- Employees arrested for a misdemeanor offense which would indicate a possible danger or appearance of danger to the school district, co-employees, or to pupils may be suspended with pay, pending adjudication.
- Employees arrested for a misdemeanor offense which would indicate a possible danger or appearance of danger to pupils but not to the school district or co-employees may be reassigned to different responsibilities away from pupils within the district, pending adjudication.
- Employees arrested for a felony offense may be suspended with pay, pending adjudication.

In certain circumstances, other employment action may be taken.

Adopted 9/10/02; Revised 1/27/09, 10/25/11, 8/14/18

Legal References:

A. S.C. Code, 1976 as amended:
   1. Section 16-3-755 - Sexual battery with a student.
   2. Section 16-23-420 and 430 - Concealed weapons; school property exception.
   3. Section 59-25-430 - Teacher dismissal; evident unfitness for teaching.
   4. Section 59-25-450 - Teacher suspension.