



Personal and Professional Boundaries – Summary

In this segment you learned about personal and professional boundaries - staying within your role when you work with students. Remember, the more support students need, the more maintaining healthy boundaries becomes important.

Four important Boundaries –

- The Staff / Student Boundary:
Establish your role as a staff person, not as a friend.
- The Work / Home Boundary:
What happens at home should stay at home. Maintain a separation between your work and personal life.
- The Personal Distance Boundary:
Keep appropriate physical distance between you and the students you work with.
- The Advice Giving Boundary:
Don't give advice outside your professional role.

Benefits of Good Boundaries –

- Preserves your ability to work with students by establishing a clear student-teacher relationship with a focus on learning.
- Protects you from accusations of impropriety or favoritism.
- Models healthy student-teacher relationships for students.
- Preserves your privacy by keeping the focus on school and school events not your life outside of school.

How Crossing Boundary Lines Can Lead to Trouble –

- Students may not see you as an authority or take you seriously.
- Students may use personal information against you.
- Students may feel uncomfortable if you are too physically close.
- Giving advice outside your role could result in ethical or legal problems.

What Can You Do To Stay Within Boundaries??

- Maintain Appropriate Self Disclosure:
“Self-disclosure” is a term that relates to what information you tell others about yourself and your personal life. Remember these important rules about self-disclosure –
 - The Headline Rule – Are you okay with whatever you say to a student being on the headlines of tomorrow’s paper?
 - The Campaign Rule – Always keep in mind how what you say might be twisted or misconstrued.

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- The Helpful Rule – Is the information you reveal helpful to the student? Can the information be potentially harmful? Could it disrupt your relationship with students, causing them to judge, dislike, distrust you?
- Use Protective Strategies –
 - Think Ahead - Consider the possible impact of your actions and the ways they could lead you into a boundary dilemma.
 - Have A Witness – If you are in a situation where you might be accused of impropriety, have another staff member with you.
 - Document - Write down anything that happens that you might be concerned about and let others know. Never keep incidents that concern you to yourself.

Mythbuster

MYTH: It's helpful for educators to dress, act and talk like students so students feel like they are more approachable.

TRUTH: Students prefer educators who listen, care and are good adult role models. Trying to fit in with students socially won't earn you respect.

Go Do It !

In the next week, focus your attention on the requests students make and questions they ask of you and your co-workers. Keep your eyes open for potential boundary violations. If you identify one see if you can identify which of the four boundary categories it fits into.