

Professional Conduct and Boundaries for Alabama Schools

**IF YOU SEE
SOMETHING,
SAY SOMETHING.**



Create an awareness of educator/student boundaries that maintain a safe, healthy, and secure learning environment for all students.

Stimulating Thinking

How does the educator/student relationship evolve appropriately to impact student learning?



Participants will



- develop an understanding of proper and improper educator/student relationships and the life-changing impact they have on a student;
- discuss strategies to avoid a boundary violation;
- know and understand educator/student boundaries; and
- identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviors when developing a relationship with a student.

In the News

Cases of improper relationships between teachers and students are on the rise nationwide.



BREAKING NEWS

**Alabama has One of the Highest Rates of
Inappropriate Teacher-Student Sexual
Relationships.**

BREAKING NEWS

Since Alabama criminalized teacher-student sexual relationships, incidents of this crime went from 11 cases annually to 45 cases in 2017.

BREAKING NEWS

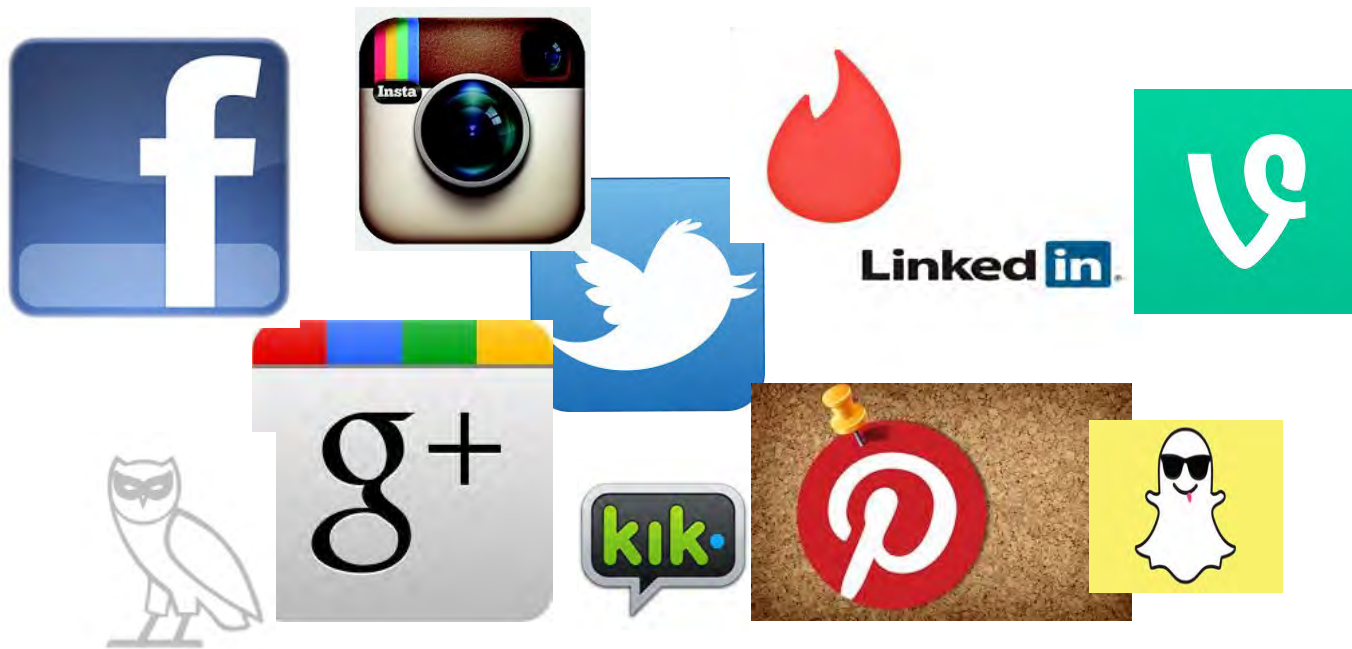
“Alabama has a Student-Teacher Sex Problem” (New York Post, June 2017).

Alabama also does a better job of reporting these incidents than many states.

BREAKING NEWS

**Alabama Leads the Nation
on a per capita basis in
Inappropriate Student-Teacher
Relationships.**

Do you have a Social Media Account?





Teacher Charged with Sex with 15-year-old Student after Video Surfaces

Alabama Cases

Since 2010, there have been over 200 educators arrested for engaging in a sex act or sexual contact with a student, soliciting a sex act or sexual contact from a student, or distributing obscene material to a student. (2011-25; 2012-27; 2013-35; 2014-51; 2015-46- 2016-49).



Common sense should prevail, but *“The absence of reason is usually at the heart of inappropriate relationships.”*



- What is happening?
- Why are there more cases each year?



Video Scenario



Video Scenario Debrief

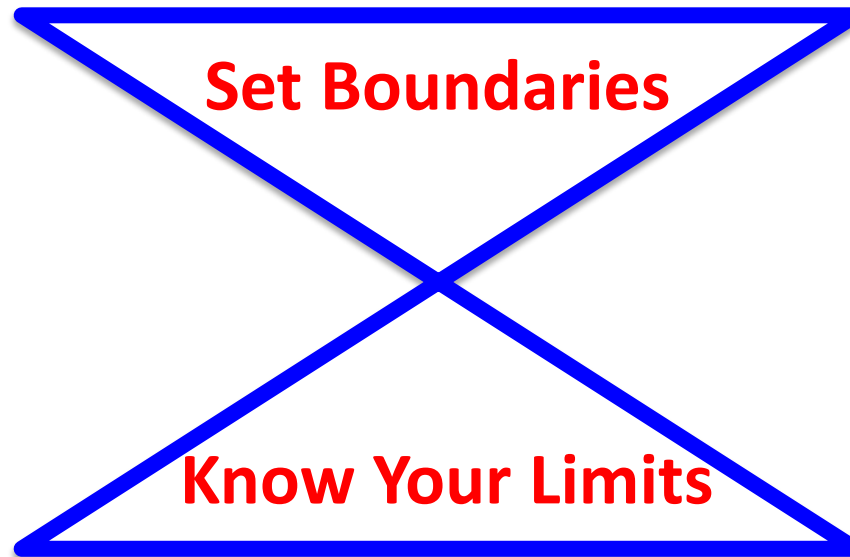


Enough is enough!



Professional Boundaries

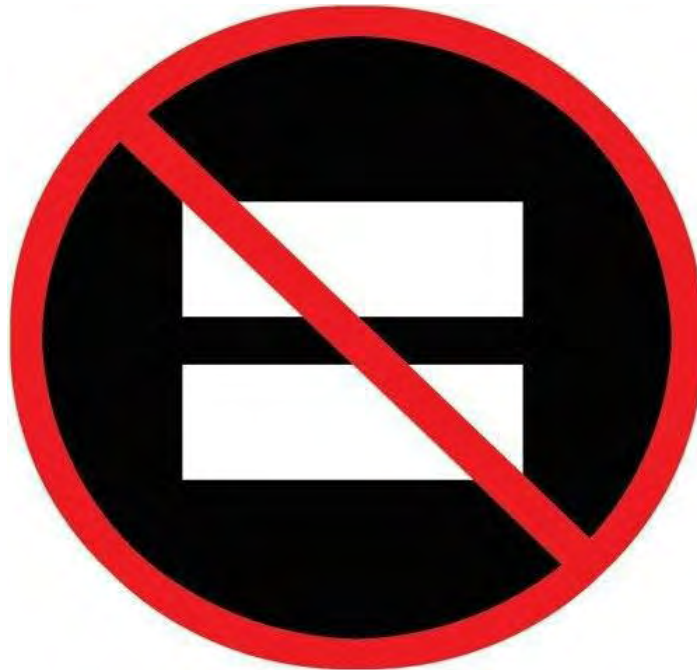
Parameters describe the limits of a relationship between an educator and a student.



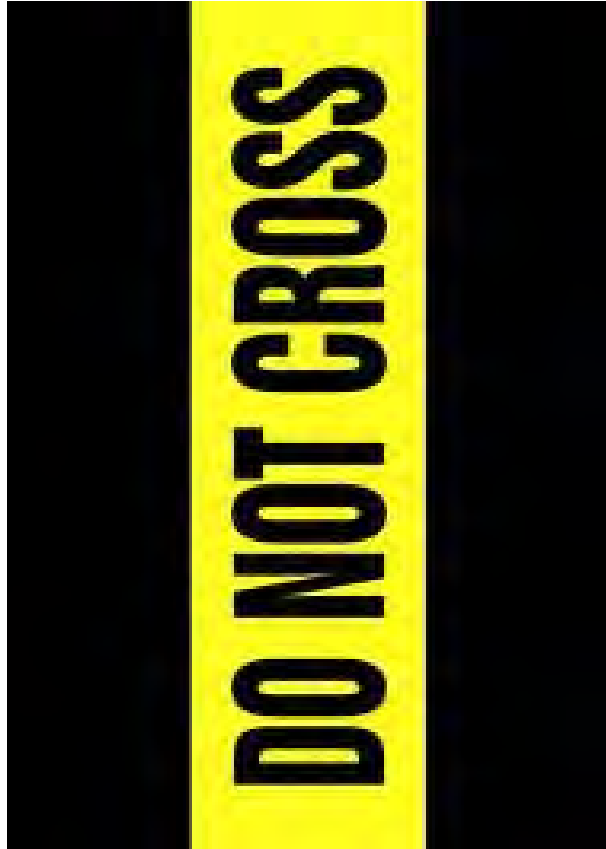
Professional Boundaries

The educator/student relationship is not equal.

(Bird, 2015)



Boundary Violations



- Emotional
- Relationship
- Communication

Emotional Violations

- “Playing favorites” with certain students
- Using subtle forms of control
- Showing preferential treatment



Relationship Violations

- Forming intimate relationships with students
- Having a romantic relationship with a student
- Meeting a student alone outside of school



(Teacher Registration Board, 2015)

Communication Violations

- Providing a student with advice on personal matters
- Using social media to communicate romantically or sexually



Boundary Violations

- Emotional
- **Relationship**
- Communication



The Teacher/Student Relationship

The overwhelming majority of educators in Alabama exercise their professional responsibility with care and conviction.



Not all sexual misconduct cases begin with the intention to victimize a student.

Some teachers fall prey to the slippery slope of misconduct.



Unintentional Boundary Violation

Some educator/student relationships may initially be appropriate and well-intentioned, but at some point they can shift to serving the needs of the teacher and not the needs of the student.



Table Talk

A teacher's conversation with a student after class:

Teacher: *Maria, I've noticed that you've been absent for the last three days. I'm glad you are here today. Is everything OK?*

Student: *No, my father walked out on us and my boyfriend broke up with me. I wish more guys were like you.*

How would you respond to the student's comment?

Intentional Boundary Violations

Some teachers intentionally groom a student for the purpose of engaging in sexual misconduct.



A Student's Response

Actual statement submitted by a student to the Texas Education Agency Division of Educator Investigations:

“I’m writing this letter not to stir up drama or controversy, but because I now have the confidence and courage to say that Mr. Benedict is a predator. He gains the trust of female students and slowly makes advances at them. He exploits his power and authority as a teacher to manipulate female students.”

(Name has been changed.)

Sexual Grooming

Finding a vulnerable student and engaging in inappropriate boundary invasions



Grooming Process: Phase 1

Picking a student



Grooming Process: Phase 2

Engaging with a student in student-like behaviors



Grooming Process: Phase 3

Desensitizing the student to touch



Grooming Process: Phase 4

Isolating the student



Grooming Process: Phase 5

Making the student feel responsible



What are the teacher behavior expectations on your campus?



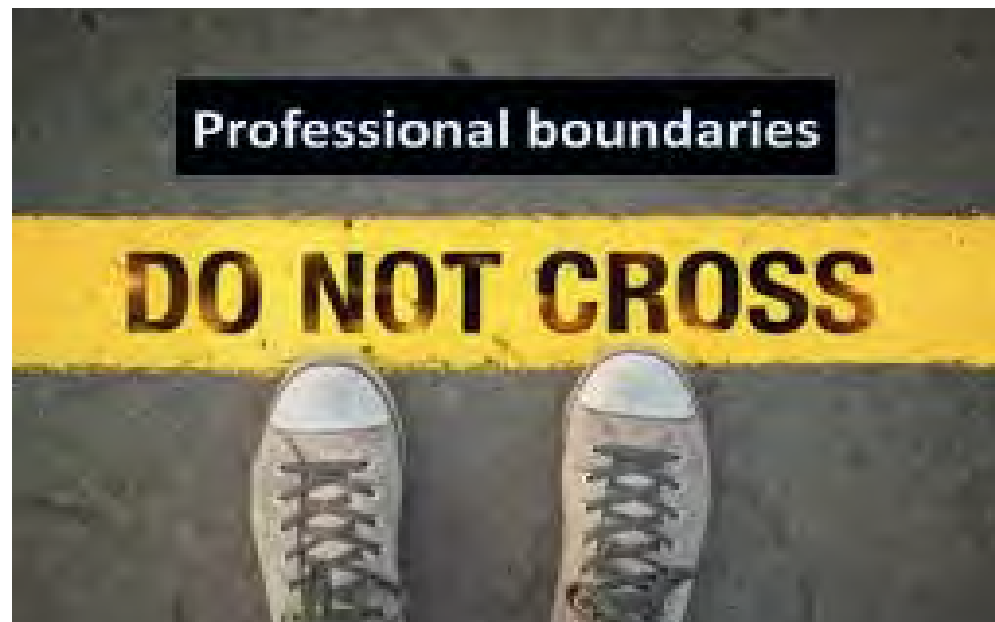
Maintaining Professional Boundaries

No significant learning can
occur without a significant
relationship.

- James Comer

Maintaining Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries can be maintained by making them **transparent**, **approved**, and **timely**.



Maintaining Professional Boundaries



Maintaining Professional Boundaries

Build a supportive relationship by being a teacher and not a friend.

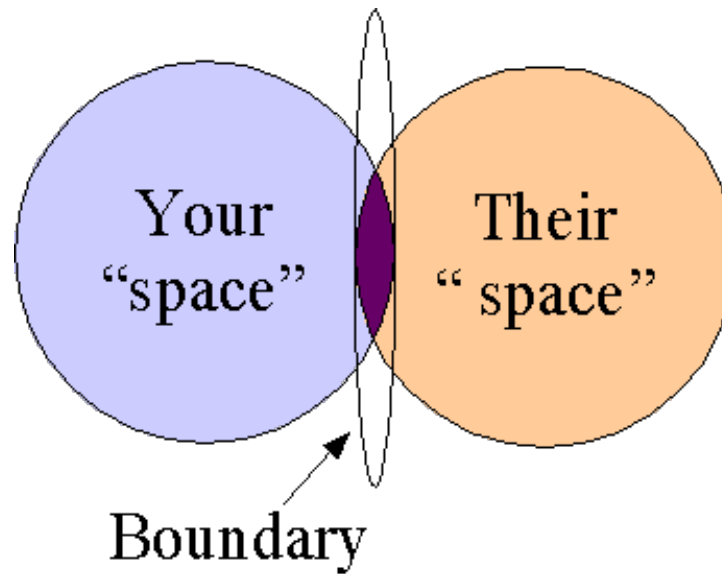
We **listen**, **guide**, **praise**, **correct**, **respect**, **honor**, **discipline**, and **TEACH** effectively.



Guideline Expectations

Don't have one-on-one meetings behind closed doors or personal social media exchanges.

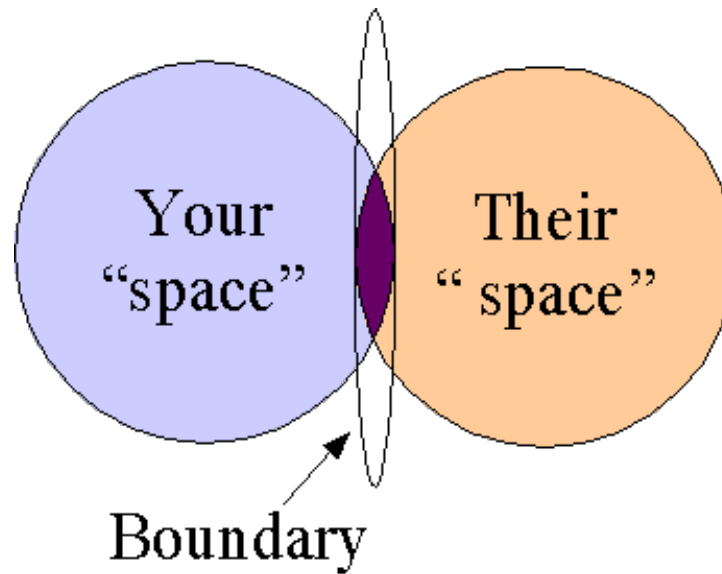
Do listen, praise, and guide your students.



Guideline Expectations

Don't have meetings with your students away from school, and don't exchange personal gifts.

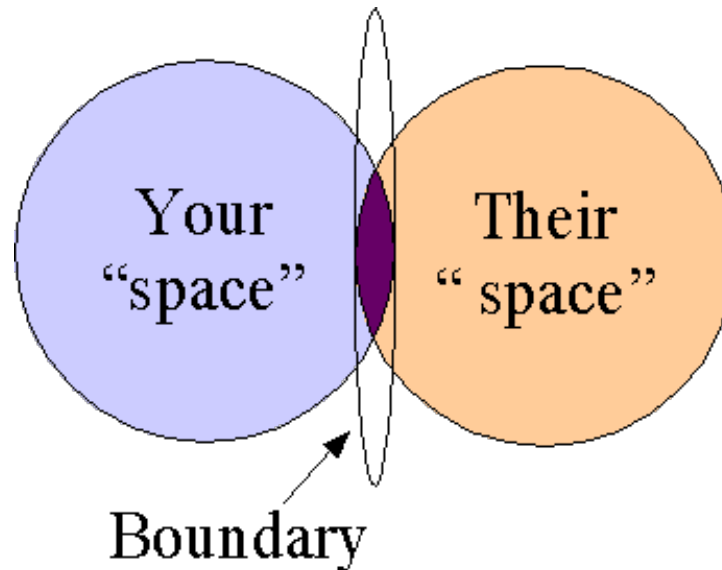
Do respect, discipline, and honor your students.



Guideline Expectations

Don't have physical contact with your students.

Do correct and teach your students.



PERFORMANCE TASK

Reflection

The word "Reflection" is rendered in a bold, 3D, golden-yellow font. The letters are thick and have a metallic sheen. They are positioned on a dark blue floor that features a perspective grid of lighter blue lines. A clear, dark blue reflection of the word is visible directly beneath the letters, creating a symmetrical effect. The background is a smooth gradient of blue, transitioning from a lighter shade at the top to a darker shade at the bottom.



ANY
QUESTIONS
?

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