

TEXAS EDUCATORS' ETHICS TRAINING

Teacher & Student Personal Boundaries

tea.texas.gov


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

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Stimulating Thinking


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

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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.


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In the News


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




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BREAKING
NEWS

Inappropriate Teacher-Student Relations in Texas Kept Going Up in 2015


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**BREAKING
NEWS**

Texas Teacher, Student Seen
in Sex Tape to Appear on Dr. Phil

TEA 7

**BREAKING
NEWS**

Teacher Charged, Says She 'Fell in Love'
With 15-Year-Old Student

TEA 8

**BREAKING
NEWS**

Teacher-Student Sex Rampant in Texas:
Lawmakers Seek Solutions

TEA 9

**Former Seguin High School Teacher
Who Pleaded Guilty to Having
Sex with a Student
Lands on “Most Wanted” List**



Photo: Guadalupe County Jail

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Somber Headlines

**Improper Teacher-Student Cases on Track
to Break Texas Record**




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Current Statistics for Texas Public Schools

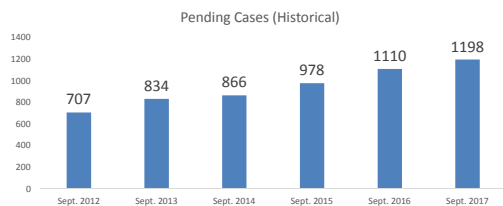
In FY 2017, the Texas Education Agency opened 302 cases related to inappropriate relationships for the ninth consecutive year of growth.



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TEA Educator Investigations Cases pending at beginning of FY



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



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



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Video Scenario



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Video Scenario Debrief



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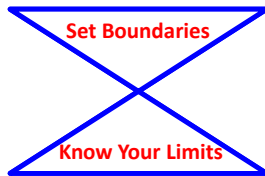
Enough is enough!



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Professional Boundaries

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



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Professional Boundaries

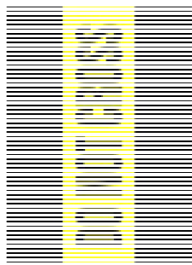
The educator/student relationship is not equal.

(Bird, 2015)



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Boundary Violations



- Emotional
- Relationship
- Communication



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Emotional Violations

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



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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)



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Communication Violations


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




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Boundary Violations

- Emotional
- **Relationship**
- Communication




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The Teacher/Student Relationship


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





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

Some teachers fall prey to the slippery slope of misconduct.




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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.



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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?



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Intentional Boundary Violations

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



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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.)



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Sexual Grooming

Finding a vulnerable student and engaging in inappropriate boundary invasions



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Grooming Process: Phase 1

Picking a student



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Grooming Process: Phase 2

Engaging with a student in student-like behaviors



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Grooming Process: Phase 3

Desensitizing the student to touch



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Grooming Process: Phase 4

Isolating the student



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Grooming Process: Phase 5

Making the student feel responsible



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What are the teacher behavior expectations on your campus?



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Maintaining Professional Boundaries

No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship.

- James Comer



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Maintaining Professional Boundaries

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



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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.

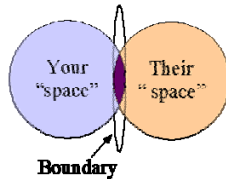


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Guideline Expectations

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

Do listen, praise, and guide your students.

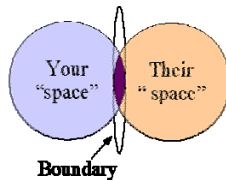


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Guideline Expectations

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

Do respect, discipline, and honor your students.

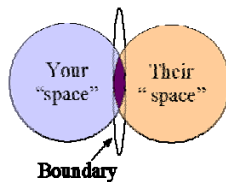


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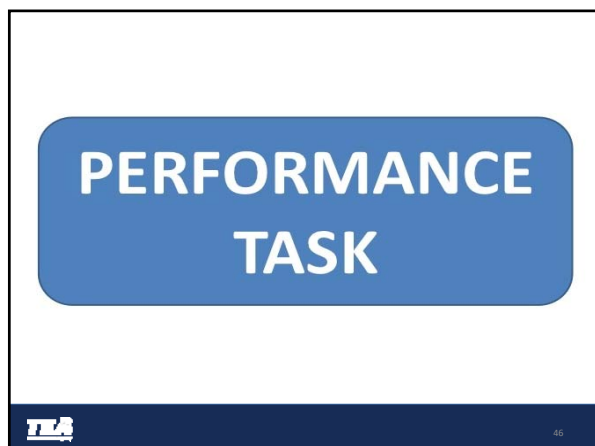
Guideline Expectations

Don't have physical contact with your students.

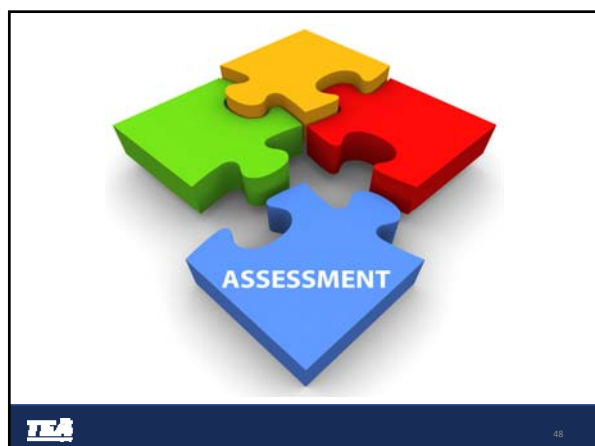
Do correct and teach your students.



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