RZJHS Employee Code of Professional Conduct (last updated 2/13/25)

(Section A) All school personnel are expected to maintain professional, respectful, and cooperative relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and community members. Accordingly, school personnel must adhere to generally recognized professional conduct standards, including but not limited to the following. **When in doubt, employees are encouraged to consult with their administrator.**

A1. Demonstrate appropriate and professional preparedness, punctuality, attendance, language, communications, and appearance.

A2. Exemplify honesty and integrity.

A3. Respect and maintain the confidentiality of student and personnel records, test materials, and other information.

A4. Maintain integrity with members of the school community by not giving or accepting payments or gifts that may be construed as an exchange for preferential treatment of certain students.

A5. Maintain an environment free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, hazing, discrimination, and violence. (See also Student Handbook pp. 15-22)

A6. Refrain from being impaired and/or under the influence of alcohol, illegal or prohibited drugs, and/or prohibited substances, when at school or school-related programs and events, in order to maintain a safe and healthy environment and quality instruction and/or performance for the school and its students.

A7. Demonstrate conduct that is aligned with the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators incorporated by reference into this policy, and conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.

A8. Comply with all applicable State and federal laws and school policies.

(Section B) Expectations for Employee-Student Boundaries:

School employees must at all times, whether during or outside of school, maintain appropriate and professional employee-student boundaries and relationships. Relationships between students and school employees are inherently unbalanced, as school employees are uniquely positioned as individuals who care for and have authority and influence in relation to students. School employees may violate appropriate employee-student boundaries when they misuse their position of power over a student in a way that compromises the student's physical or mental health, safety, or general welfare.

The school understands that some employees may have pre-existing relationships with students or families unrelated to the school environment. The expectations set forth below are not intended to prohibit or limit appropriate interactions with such students or families, provided that the employee is aware of and maintains appropriate employee-student boundaries during all interactions. ***When in doubt, employees are encouraged to consult with their administrator.***

Recognizing the age range and developmental level of the school's students, some examples of inappropriate employee conduct that may lead to a breach of employee-student boundaries include, but are not limited to:

B1. Engaging with students as peers in a way that causes role confusion for students and/or encourages them to engage inappropriately with staff.

B2. Sharing personal issues with students that have the potential to cause students discomfort

B3. Favoring certain students by inviting them to meetings during non-instructional times to "hang out" or giving certain students gifts or special privileges.

B4. Meeting with a student off-campus without the parent/guardian's knowledge and/or permission.

B5. Taking, possessing and/or using photos and/or videos of students for non-educational purposes, or without school administration authorization.

B6. Transporting a student in a school or private vehicle alone and/or without written permission (email or hard copy) from their parent.

B7. Participating in or requesting participation in a meeting with a student outside the employee's professional role, without school administration authorization.

B8. Privately messaging students through social media, personal phone numbers (except as needed on school trips, with administrative authorization), or personal email accounts.

B9. Adding or "friending" students on personal social networking sites. (see Online Social Networking Policy on p. 33 of Faculty-Staff Handbook)

B10. Inviting students to an employee's home (does not include invitations extended by school-age children of the employee who are friends of the student, or in the case of families getting together when they have a pre-existing relationship and/or whose school-age children are friends)

B11. Dating a student or requesting to date a student, or sexual or romantic invitations or advances toward a student.

B12. Making sexually suggestive comments, engaging in sexualized or romantic dialogue, commenting on a student's physical attributes or excessively flattering a student.

B13. Massages, tickling, lingering or excessive touching, or sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with a student.

(Section C) Instead, the school expects employees to abide by the following non-exhaustive standards when interacting with students:

C1. Conduct any one-on-one conference with students in a classroom or office with the door open, when possible, or minimally when visible through an interior window.

C2. Meet with students off-campus only with parent/guardian knowledge or permission (for example, when providing pre-arranged tutoring or coaching).

C3. Use school-approved methods for communicating with students.

C4. Only transport students in school or private vehicles with administrative authorization and/or written permission from the parents.

C5. Take, possess, or use photos/videos of students only for school-related purposes, with eligible student or parent/guardian consent and school administration authorization.

C6. Abide by relevant and applicable student records laws and school policies with respect to confidentiality of student records.

(Section D) Violations of Professional Conduct Standards:

Violations of the employee code of professional conduct policy or failure to report a violation of the employee code of professional conduct policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Violations of the employee professional conduct policy may include, but are not limited to, the following:

D1. Using school property without appropriate authorization.

D2. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting professional qualifications or information submitted during the application and/or hiring process.

D3. Disclosing to non-staff members confidential information concerning student records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, or assessment/testing results, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law.

D4. Failing to appropriately respond to, or report to an administrator, a witnessed or reported incident of possible student-on-student bullying, harassment, hazing, or teen dating violence. (see Student Handbook pp. 15-22).

D5. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information during the course of an investigation.

D6. Willfully or negligently failing to report sexual harassment.

D7. Willfully or negligently failing to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/). (See Abuse and Neglect policy on p. 34 of Faculty-Staff Handbook)

D8. Committing an act of child abuse, neglect, or cruelty to children.

D9. Engaging in harassing behavior, including sexual harassment.

D10. Engaging in grooming behaviors, including but not limited to *sexual misconduct*, which is defined as (i) any act, including but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, (ii) by an employee or agent of the school with direct contact with

a student, (iii) that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A sexual or romantic invitation
- Dating or soliciting a date
- Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog
- Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student
- Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature
- A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student

D11. Engaging in any of the prohibited activities listed in the school's drug- and alcohol-free workplace policy.

D12. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, or any other illegal or unauthorized substance, including e-cigarettes, to any student or giving permission to a student under his or her supervision to use tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, or any other illegal or unauthorized substance.

D13. Carrying a firearm on or into any school-controlled building, real property, or parking area, or any school transportation vehicle, unless specifically permitted by law.

D14. Misusing school-related funds.

D15. Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents/guardians.

D16. Submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay.

D17. Comingling school funds with personal funds or accounts.

D18. Soliciting students or parents/guardians to purchase supplies or services from the employee or to participate in activities that financially benefit the employee without fully disclosing the interest.

D19. Any other violation of State or federal law or school policy, administrative directives, or generally recognized professional conduct standards.

E1. This list of employee conduct standards is not exhaustive; therefore, an employee may be disciplined for conduct that is not specifically listed above.

E2. Training:

School personnel are expected to attend all required trainings on educator ethics and child abuse.