



## Teacher student relationships

DOs

- All social interaction must be with the consent of the student the parents and the school where appropriate
- Develop a relationship with clear professional boundaries that will not be misunderstood as a personal interest
- A pat on the back, shaking hands or holding the hand of young children for encouragement is okay as long as the student is not uncomfortable
- Make sure to respect personal space
- Cater to individual needs and sensitivities
- It is a criminal offense to have an adult relationship with a student under 18 years old
- In addition, being an Orthodox Jewish school, we observe the laws of Yichud (laws detailing appropriate interactions). Therefore:
  - male teachers are not to touch or be alone with female students aged 3 or older (unless saving them from a car in the road, getting them safely across the road, medical necessity, breaking up a fight or the like);
  - female teachers are not to touch or be alone with or sing in the presence of male students aged 9 or older (unless saving them from a car in the road, getting them safely across the road, medical necessity, breaking up a fight or the like);
  - the situation varies if it is late at night, early in the morning or at other times when there is little traffic from passersby or very secluded. In such cases, a teacher should be even more careful to avoid any and all suspicions;
  - if a student is behaving in an overly familiar way or appears to be seeking a personal relationship with a teacher, the teacher should report these concerns to Administration so a plan can be developed to manage the situation effectively and sensitively;
  - in current times, teachers need to be as strict with students of the same gender as they are with the halachic expectations of the opposite gender;
  - the rule of thumb is to make sure exclusion with a student never occurs so that there can never be suspicion of inappropriate behaviour.

DON'Ts

### Watch out for Grooming

Grooming is overly personal or intimate conduct. All grooming behaviours and inappropriate endearment between teachers and students of either gender are totally forbidden. Grooming behaviours are actions or words which endear the student to the adult, making them feel exclusively important or attractive or special in an inappropriate way to the adult. Grooming behaviour is defined as 'a course of conduct enacted ... which would give a reasonable person cause for concern that any meeting with a child arising from the conduct would be for [inappropriate] purposes.' It is any behaviour which would lead the child to be in conflict if the adult began to make physical advances into part of the relationship. It crosses professional boundaries.

Teacher must obtain permission from the School and student parents before:

- Inviting a student to the teacher's home
- Visiting the student at home
- Attending parties or social functions of any kind with a student
- Tutoring or coaching a student at the school
- Making other social arrangements with a student