

## VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**SUPERINTENDENT POLICY NO. 4119.21 and 4219.21**

**ADOPTED: 05/16/22**

**CLASSIFICATION: Personnel**

**SUBJECT: Professional Standards**

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The County Superintendent expects Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) employees to maintain the highest ethical standards, behave professionally, follow policies and regulations, abide by state and federal laws, and exercise good judgment when interacting with students and other members of the school community. Employees shall engage in conduct that enhances the integrity of the VCOE, advances the goals of its educational programs, and contributes to a positive school climate.

The County Superintendent encourages VCOE employees to accept as guiding principles the professional standards and codes of ethics adopted by educational or professional associations to which they may belong.

Each employee is expected to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill his/her responsibilities and to contribute to the learning and achievement of county students.

### Inappropriate Conduct

Inappropriate employee conduct includes, but is not limited to:

1. Engaging in any conduct that endangers students, staff, or others, including, but not limited to, physical violence, threats of violence, or possession of a firearm or other weapon.
2. Engaging in harassing or discriminatory behavior towards students, parents/guardians, staff, or community members, or failing or refusing to intervene when an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying against a student is observed.
3. Physically abusing, sexually abusing, neglecting, or otherwise willfully harming or injuring a child.
4. Engaging in inappropriate socialization or fraternization with a student or soliciting, encouraging, or maintaining an inappropriate written, verbal, or physical relationship with a student.
5. Possessing or viewing any pornography on school grounds or possessing or viewing child pornography or other imagery portraying children in a sexualized manner at any time.
6. Using profane, obscene, or abusive language against students, parents/guardians, staff, or community members.
7. Willfully disrupting VCOE or school operations by loud or unreasonable noise or other action.
8. Using tobacco, alcohol, or an illegal or unauthorized substance, or possessing or distributing any controlled substance, while in the workplace, on VCOE property, or at a VCOE-sponsored activity.

9. Being dishonest with students, parents/guardians, staff, or members of the public, including, but not limited to, falsifying information in employment records or other school records.
10. Divulging confidential information about students, VCOE employees, or county operations to persons or entities not authorized to receive the information.
11. Using VCOE equipment or other county resources for the employee's own commercial purposes or for political activities.
12. Using VCOE equipment or communications devices for personal purposes while on duty, except in an emergency, during scheduled work breaks, or for personal necessity.
13. Employees shall be notified that computer files and all electronic communications, including, but not limited to, email and voice mail, are not private. To ensure proper use, the County Superintendent or designee may monitor employee usage of VCOE technological resources at any time without the employee's consent.
14. Causing damage to or engaging in theft of property belonging to students, staff, or the VCOE
15. Wearing inappropriate attire.

#### Reports of Misconduct

An employee who observes or has evidence of another employee's inappropriate conduct shall immediately report such conduct to the supervisor, principal or County Superintendent or designee. An employee who has knowledge of or suspects child abuse or neglect shall file a report pursuant to the VCOE's child abuse reporting procedures as detailed in AR 5141.4 - Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting.

Any reports of employee misconduct shall be promptly investigated. Any employee who is found to have engaged in inappropriate conduct in violation of law or County Superintendent policy shall be subject to disciplinary action and, in the case of a certificated employee, may be subject to a report to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The County Superintendent or designee shall notify local law enforcement as appropriate.

An employee who has knowledge of but fails to report inappropriate employee conduct may also be subject to discipline.

The VCOE prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a complaint against an employee or reports an employee's inappropriate conduct. Any employee who retaliates against any such complainant, reporter, or other participant in the county's complaint process shall be subject to discipline.

#### Notifications

The section(s) of the VCOE's employee code of conduct addressing interactions with students shall be provided to parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year and shall be posted on school and/or VCOE web sites. (Education Code 44050)

Legal References:

Management Resources

	<u>Description</u>
Commission on Teacher Credentialing Publication	California Standards for the Teaching Profession, 2009
Commission on Teacher Credentialing Publication	California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, February 2014
Council of Chief State School Officers Publication	Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, 2015
National Education Association Publication	Code of Ethics of the Education Profession, 1975
Website	WestEd
Website	CSBA
Website	Council of Chief State School Officers
Website	Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Website	California Teachers Association
Website	California School Employees Association
Website	California Federation of Teachers
Website	California Department of Education
Website	Association of California School Administrators
WestEd Publication	Moving Leadership Standards into Everyday Work: Descriptions of Practice, 2003

State

	<u>Description</u>
5 CCR 80303	Reports of change in employment status, alleged misconduct
5 CCR 80331-80338	Rules of conduct for professional educators
Ed. Code 200-262.4	Educational equity; prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex
Ed. Code 44050	Employee code of conduct; interaction with students
Ed. Code 44242.5	Reports and review of alleged misconduct
Ed. Code 48980	Parent/Guardian notifications
Pen. Code 11164-11174.4	Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act