

HOW CAN I MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES WHILE SUPPORTING QUEER AND TRANS STUDENTS?

Establishing trust with students (especially queer and trans students), may lead them to seek support beyond academics, requiring educators to establish professional boundaries to maintain healthy teacher-student dynamics. These boundaries address requests and behaviours that could strain capacity or compromise the educator's career, such as excessive time demands or inappropriate relationship extensions from students.



SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

GUIDELINES

- Your school, board, provincial/territorial professional association, and union have professional guidelines that you are obligated to follow. These should be a starting point to determine your professional boundaries as you engage with all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression.
- After reviewing the professional guidelines from those governing bodies, consider:
 - Your legal responsibilities and limitations (e.g duty to report)
 - What you need to be comfortable in your class and stay within your capacity (e.g set times for communications, limited sharing of personal life etc).

More FROM SAFER:

Use the QR Code below to access additional tipsheets and info on the SAFER project.



SET BOUNDARIES

- Some boundaries can be flexible (e.g. contact hours), others firm (e.g. duty to report). Prepare for each school year by identifying your boundaries, their firmness, and steps to follow when boundaries are crossed or challenged. Ensure action is taken when boundaries are crossed.
- Communicate your boundaries early and clearly with students and families/caregivers. Provide reminders throughout the year.

MAINTAIN BOUNDARIES

- If students struggle to understand or respect your boundaries, explain why they are important, and help them identify their own boundaries with commitment to mutual respect.
- If a student's need exceeds your boundaries or capabilities, support your student and honour your commitment to your own wellbeing by guiding them to the resources they need at school or in the community e.g. GSA, school counsellor, mental health helpline, etc.



RESOURCES:

Teaching Kids About Boundaries:

<https://childmind.org/article/teaching-kids-boundaries-empathy/>

How to Define Boundaries with Your Students—and Stick to Them:

<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/inspiring-minds/how-to-define-boundaries-with-your-students-and-stick-to-them>

How to Listen Less: Setting Boundaries when it Comes to Students Emotional Disclosures:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/11/04/setting-boundaries-when-it-comes-students-emotional-disclosures-essay>