



PROTECT YOURSELF FROM RISKY SITUATIONS

SDAO has created these best practices to help employees protect themselves and others when working with minors within your district. A minor is defined as any individual under the age of 18. While this list is not exhaustive, it provides a strong foundation for establishing and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.

- 1. Maintain observable and interruptible interactions with minors.** Transparency is crucial for the safety of all parties (common areas, doors open, clear sightlines).
- 2. Avoid one-on-one private meetings with a minor** unless approved in advance and unavoidable. Document such situations promptly.
- 3. Maintain only professional, appropriate physical contact with minors;** never sexual, intrusive, or for personal gratification. Avoid close or unnecessary interactions, keeping any brief contact (like high fives or fist bumps) appropriate and professional.
- 4. Use only district-approved communication channels with minors.** Never share your cellphone number, send private texts, DMs, or contact on social media. Approved platforms ensure supervisory access to records and help protect you against allegations (district email, Teams, Slack, Google Workspace).
- 5. It is best to communicate with minors only at reasonable hours** and about district-related topics. After-hours and off-topic communication can appear inappropriate.
- 6. Avoid gift giving, favoritism, secrets, or special treatment** that could appear inappropriate.
- 7. Keep appearance-related comments strictly professional;** if it would be inappropriate in front of a minor's parents, do not say it. Never bully, threaten, shame, or use harsh, degrading, or otherwise inappropriate language toward a minor.
- 8. Avoid oversharing with minors.** Do not discuss romantic or intimate topics and never engage in or allow any conversation or behavior direct or perceived that is sexual in nature.
- 9. If a minor talks to you about their romantic relationships, use caution,** consider adding a second adult to the conversation and limit your involvement to that which is professional.

10. Always use district devices for any photos or recordings of minors. Never capture images or recordings without proper consent and avoid anything revealing or inappropriate. Content captured on your personal device may make that device discoverable in legal cases.

11. Transporting minors creates the risk of interactions with a minor in a private environment. **Use district-approved transportation** and have multiple adults present. Only transport a minor alone in a true emergency and report it to your supervisor immediately.

When something occurs outside of these best practices, you have a duty to report it to your supervisor, whether it is something you were directly involved in or something you witnessed or were told. For example:

- Minor in crisis calls/emails you outside of normal business hours.
- A minor gains access to your personal cell phone number.
- A minor is suspected of having romantic feelings for you.

If you come across a situation where child sexual abuse images/materials are present, do not view them, and do not delete them (this includes on the minor's phones). Believe the minor when they say the image(s) exist and contact law enforcement immediately and notify your supervisor.

MANDATORY REPORTING

If you have reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused, immediately **report it to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline: 855 503 SAFE (7233)** or law enforcement.

Next, notify your supervisor or the district's designated person.

For additional resources, or to access in-person training, reach out to ***riskmanagement@sdao.com***.

