



Types of Boundaries that may be Inadvertantly Crossed (not an exhaustive list)

Table with 2 columns: Boundary Type and Description. Rows include Financial, Professional, Curricular, Religious, Technology\*, Anger, Relationship, Physical, and Off Campus Conduct.

\*In the realm of virtual teaching, you must be purposefully aware of challenges associated with the use of technology in order to avoid consequences associated with crossing boundaries.

Key is transparency

Talk to your mentor, supervisor, or OFS staff within 24 hours of any incidents that makes you feel uncomfortable or you feel may have crossed a boundary line.

Students and parents can also cross boundaries. If a student or parent makes you feel uncomfortable or asks you to do something that you feels crosses boundaries report it to your mentor, supervisor and/or OFS staff member.

Your Job is to be the Teacher

Relationship building is an important part of being a teacher but crossing the line from teacher to friend is dangerous.

- Do not supercede the role of parents, friends, counselors, or social workers. Know each school’s “chain of command”.
- Offer encouragement and listen but never promise to keep things secret. Report to authorities when needed.
- School counselors have the training and resources to help students. Encourage students to confide in the counselor if something is too personal or puts a child at risk.
- Maintain professional behavior while supporting students even in difficult times for the child.

**General Rule: Do not do anything that you would not like to see on the news the next morning!**

**Consequences:**

Crossing Boundaries has many consequences. Some can lead to the loss of your teaching career, a few consequences are listed below:

- Loss of eligibility to apply for teaching license
- Jail Time
- Recorded on Permanent Teaching Record/File with the school district and/or Ohio Department of Education

**Some Reasons Boundaries Get Crossed:**

Adults	Poorly trained Physically/emotionally impaired In a life crisis Think they are helping Feel sorry for child/family
Students	Lack of closeness with another History of abuse/Trauma Low self-esteem Seeking approval Unaware of situation Tend to believe it’s normal

**Prevention:**

- Find out the school/district rules on electronic devices, appropriate communication channels, appropriate communication topics, financial boundaries, etc. and follow them
- Be aware of the types of boundaries and how to handle a situation without crossing them.
- Talk to a mentor/supervisor about anything that concerns you
- Avoid contact with students outside of school hours
- Avoid repeated unscheduled meetings with students
- When alone with students, always leave doors open or try to meet in a public space
- Listen, make rules, follow through
- Respond to student needs with acceptance/support while maintaining appropriate boundaries

**Remember: TEACHERS IN OHIO ARE MANDATED REPORTERS! It's the law**

***Child Abuse<sup>1</sup>***

The laws of every state require teachers to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. This includes interns with instructional responsibility in the classroom. The National Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 defines child abuse as physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen or the age under the child protection law of the state in question, by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare, under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby. ***Every state grants teachers who make such reports immunity from civil and criminal suits. In most states teachers can be fined or imprisoned if they do not make the report, and in some states they can be sued for negligence.***