



Policies for Promoting Safe Environments for Student Learning and Engagement

Board Approved: June 17, 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

Empower Generations, which operates California public charter schools (“Empower” or the “School”), is committed to promoting safe environments for learner learning and engagement. Empower ensures that the School is a safe and nurturing place for learners that is free from fear, threats of violence, violent crimes, and sexual offenses committed by, or intended to be committed by, other learners, employees, volunteers, and contractors. The School also promotes safe environments for learning and engagement that are easily supervised through its facilities and furnishing of facilities. This policy is intended to meet the requirements of Education Code section 32100(b). The School may work with its insurance provider, public entity risk pool, joint powers authority, or other relevant stakeholder(s) as applicable or as needed to identify and adopt best practices to prevent violent crimes, injury, sex offenses, and egregious misconduct. The School’s CEO or designee is authorized to update this policy as needed to align with CDE guidance and/or applicable law.

2. Professional Boundaries and Appropriate Limits on Contact

Empower expects all employees, volunteers, contractors (collectively, “EVCs”), and learners to behave professionally and exercise good judgment when interacting with one another. In accordance with Education Code section 32100, this policy addresses professional boundaries (i) between learners and EVCs, (ii) among and between learners, and (iii) among and between EVCs, and (iv) establishes appropriate limits on contact during or outside of the school day between learners and EVCs via social media internet platforms, text messaging, and other forms of communication that do not otherwise include the learner’s parent or guardian.

This policy may not apply to interactions that take place between learners and their own parents, legal guardians, or family members, where those individuals are also EVCs. However, EVCs who are parents, legal guardians, or family members of current learners are expected to behave professionally in the school environment.

i. Professional Boundaries Between Learners and EVCs

Empower expects its EVCs to maintain appropriate professional relationships with learners and be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with learners. The purpose of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between



learners and EVCs, but to prevent relationships that could lead to or may be perceived as inappropriate, or sexual misconduct, or grooming.

The following are examples of acceptable behavior by EVCs with respect to learners, including but not limited to:

- Handshakes
- “High-fives” and light fist/hand bumps
- Physical contact or touch required under an IEP, behavioral contract, or 504 Plan
- In an in-person setting: avoiding being alone with a learner, keeping any doors wide open if you are in a room alone with a learner unless in a counseling or other similar setting, keeping reasonable and appropriate space between you and the learner unless permitted by Empower (e.g., nurses, etc.)
- Holding hands while walking with young learners or learners with disabilities
- For employees and designated contractors, assisting with toileting of young or disabled learners in view of another staff member and in compliance with applicable policies
- Stopping and correcting learners if they cross your own personal boundaries, including, but not limited to, touching your legs, or buttocks, frontal hugs, kissing, or caressing
- Prioritizing professional behavior during all moments of learner contact

The following are examples of unacceptable behavior by EVCs with respect to learners, including but not limited to:

- Kissing of ANY kind
- Full frontal or rear hugs and lengthy embraces
- Touching buttocks, thighs, chest, stomach, or genital area
- Wrestling or roughhousing, except as permitted in the context of an athletics program
- Tickling or piggyback rides
- Any form of sexual contact
- Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a learner in a private situation or in an unobserved location
- Intentionally being alone with a learner outside of ordinary job duties (e.g., a 1:1 counseling setting), including but not limited to being alone with a learner when away from school and outside of school hours
- Furnishing alcohol, tobacco products, vaping products, CBD products, marijuana, drugs or controlled substances to a learner or failing to report knowledge of a learner’s possession of such
- “Dating” or “going out with” a learner
- Remarks about physical attributes or physiological development of anyone. This includes comments such as “Looking fine!” or “Check out that [body part].”
- Taking photographs or videos of learners for personal use or posting photographs or videos of learners online without Empower’s express permission



- Either partially or fully undressing in front of a learner or asking a learner to undress with the intent to view/expose private body parts
- Sharing a bed, mat, or sleeping bag with a learner
- Making, or participating in, sexually inappropriate comments to or in the presence of learners
- Making sexual jokes, or jokes/comments with sexual overtones or double-entendres to or in the presence of learners
- Seeking emotional involvement (which can include intimate attachment) with a learner beyond the normative care and concern required of an employee, volunteer, or contractor
- Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented to or in the presence of learners
- Discussing your personal troubles or intimate issues with a learner
- Becoming involved with a learner so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior

Empower also maintains additional related policies in this regard, including the Employee Guidebook; Uniform Complaint Procedures Policy; and Title IX Policy for Sexual Harassment and Grievance Procedures.

ii. Professional Boundaries Among and Between Learners

Learners are expected to maintain respectful, safe, and appropriate boundaries among and between each other in all School-related settings, including in-person and online.

The following are examples of acceptable behavior among and between learners, including but not limited to:

- Using respectful language in all interactions, both in person and online
- Keeping physical contact appropriate and respecting personal space
- Respecting other learners' belongings
- Asking for and respecting consent before sharing photos or videos of other learners
- Being mindful of any age and grade level differences with and among other learners
- Setting clear personal boundaries, including being able to voice discomfort and say "no" without pressure
- Using Empower online platforms responsibly and for their intended educational purposes

The following are examples of unacceptable behavior among and between learners in the School setting, including but not limited to:

- Using disrespectful language in person or online
- Engaging in unwanted physical contact with other learners or invading another learner's personal space
- Engaging in any form of sexual contact



- Making, or participating in, sexually inappropriate comments
- Making sexual jokes, or jokes/comments with sexual overtones or double-entendres
- Pressuring peers to share images or personal information
- Manipulating, coercing, or attempting to control another learner's behavior or relationships
- Exploiting differences in age, grade, or social standing of other learners or manipulating other learners for personal gain
- Ignoring any learner's stated boundaries
- Engaging in bullying, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation of any kind

Empower also maintains additional related policies in this regard, including the Family Guidebook; Uniform Complaint Procedures Policy; Title IX Policy for Sexual Harassment and Grievance Procedures; and Internet Use Policy and Agreement.

iii. Professional Boundaries Among and Between EVCs

EVCs are expected to maintain respectful, safe, and appropriate boundaries among and between each other in all School-related settings, including in-person and online.

The following are examples of acceptable behavior among and between EVCs, including but not limited to:

- Maintaining clear separation between personal and professional relationships
- Maintaining respectful, professional communication, both in person and online
- Keeping physical contact appropriate and limited to professional norms (e.g., handshakes)
- Using School-approved channels for School-related communications
- Respecting roles, responsibilities, and lines of supervision and authority
- Respecting others' time and workloads
- Protecting the confidentiality of information pertaining to learners and other EVCs; no gossip or "watercooler" talk among EVCs
- Addressing concerns or conflicts through appropriate School channels

The following are examples of unacceptable behavior among and between EVCs in the School setting, including but not limited to:

- Inappropriately pressuring colleagues or other EVCs for personal favors
- Retaliating against or undermining others who raise concerns or report issues
- Blurring personal and professional relationships
- Showing favoritism, bias, or preferential treatment to certain individuals over others
- Ignoring established roles, responsibilities, and lines of supervision and authority
- Engaging in gossip, rumors, or unprofessional discussions about others
- Using one's position to inappropriately exert influence, pressure, or control over others



- Threatening, physically aggressive, or violent behavior
- Theft, damage, or destruction of the property of the School or other EVCs

Empower also maintains additional related policies in this regard, including the Employee Guidebook; Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Prevention Policy; Uniform Complaint Procedures Policy; and Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures for Sexual Harassment.

iv. Limits on Contact Between Learners and EVCs via Social Media Internet Platforms, Text Messaging, and Other Forms of Communication

In addition to the general professional boundaries between learners and EVCs described in Section (i) above, it is important to address reasonable limits on contact between learners and EVCs during or outside of the school day via social media internet platforms, text messaging, and any other forms of communication (e.g., phone) that do not otherwise include the learner's parent or guardian.

Communications between learners and EVCs should be transparent, School-related, documentable, and accessible to parents/guardians:

- Learners and EVCs may not communicate through 1:1 emails, text messages, instant messages, electronic or digital communications via any online or social media platform, phone calls, notes, or letters, unless the communication serves a legitimate educational purpose and complies with the requirements herein.
 - o If 1:1 communication by an EVC is permitted by Empower (e.g., for homework, meetings, coordination of athletics events, etc.), messages must be limited to logistics and necessary information (e.g., practice time, cancellations, etc.).
 - o EVCs should not have personal or ongoing/lengthy private exchanges with learners.
 - o If a learner sends a 1:1 non-routine message to an EVC, the EVC should loop in the School and/or the learner's parent or guardian as appropriate.
 - o No late-night messages. Appropriate hours for sending any 1:1 communications to a learner, if warranted, are 7 AM to 6 PM unless otherwise approved by Empower.
 - o "Disappearing messages" are never allowed between EVCs and learners. EVCs and learners may not communicate with each other through any medium designed to eliminate messages or hide or alter message history (e.g., Snapchat).
- EVCs may not "friend" or "follow" learners on any social media accounts, and vice versa for learners, except as expressly approved by Empower, e.g., on Empower-managed accounts or between family members.
- EVCs may not seek out or engage with learners' personal posts (likes, comments, direct messages) on social media, and vice versa for learners.

Empower Generations

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3. Safe, Supervised Environments: School Facilities and Online Settings

Empower operates educational programs that provide instruction and educational activities in a range of settings, including in-person at Empower-operated sites or vendor facilities and through virtual platforms such as learning management systems, video conferencing, and other online environments. Across all instructional settings, whether in-person or online/virtual, Empower promotes safe environments that are appropriate for learning and engagement and are easily supervised.

Physical environments used by Empower and/or Empower's vendors for in-person learner activities should have:

- Clear lines of sight for adult supervision of learners at all times, with no isolated, unsupervised, or hidden spaces or furnishings (e.g., no tall furniture blocking sightlines).
- Adequate lighting, both indoors and outdoors.
- Maintain a layout that supports orderly movement and emergency egress, with clear wayfinding signage, as appropriate for the space, so that learners do not end up in unsupervised or restricted areas.
- Schedules and procedures shall ensure continuous supervision of learners.
- Furnishings that are age-appropriate, safe, and in good repair.
- Windows or vision panels on classroom doors, or open doors, as appropriate.

Online platforms used by Empower and/or Empower's vendors for virtual learner learning should have:

- Log-in credentials to restrict access to authorized users, prevent unauthorized entry, and protect learner data and privacy.
- The ability for authorized staff to review activity occurring in the platform.
- Records or logs of communications, and reasonable controls on private or 1:1 interactions.
- Reasonable monitoring of chat, breakout rooms, and collaborative tools.
- Digital citizenship or similar rules of use.

Empower's vendors are responsible for reviewing their facilities, furnishings, online platforms, and supervision policies to ensure compliance with this policy. Learners using online learning environments for their Empower independent studies are expected to remain focused on educational purposes when in those online environments, and to comply with Empower's applicable policies, e.g., Internet Use Policy.

4. Reporting Violations and Consequences

Any suspected violation of this policy should be reported immediately to Empower. Prompt reporting is essential to promote safe environments for learner learning and engagement.



Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action and may also be reported to relevant legal authorities, as appropriate.