

## **MSDB STUDENTS**

### Public Displays of Affection (PDA) 3201

At the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB), we recognize there are various comfort levels with giving, receiving, and observing Public Displays of Affection (PDA).

#### Our beliefs:

1. We believe one of our goals is to promote and teach appropriate human interactions in order to develop safe, healthy, and appropriate relationships with other people in our lives.
2. We believe students will have feelings for each other and those feelings are acceptable.
3. We believe that students need to learn when and where certain behaviors are appropriate and acceptable and when and where certain behaviors are not appropriate or not acceptable.

All students, regardless of age or grade, have opportunities to socialize with all genders throughout the academic and cottage settings. Socialization can be permitted at any time of the day for all students or evening for cottage students. There are many opportunities to socialize on campus in chaperoned settings. Some of these areas include assemblies, the gym, and cottage common areas. Male and female students may sit together during lunch and are permitted to sit together both in the classrooms, during assemblies, and in the common areas in the cottage.

#### PDA Definition

Public Displays of Affection (PDA) can refer to any physical contact between any two people. This contact could be in the form of a hug, holding hands, sitting closely, romantic and/or prolonged touching, playing footsies, kissing, and other forms of touching up to and including various forms of sexual contact.

Friendly touches for attention-getting and hugs for greeting or parting are acceptable in the Deaf culture and are not considered PDA. Likewise, touching for sighted (human) guide for students and adults with visual impairments is also not considered PDA.

Typically, PDA applies to couples that are in a romantic relationship. These romantic relationships naturally occur during the young adult and teenage years. Every member of the MSDB community is expected to act in a responsible and respectable manner that will bring praise and positive comments to themselves and to the school.

#### PDA in Academic Settings

PDA is not allowed in any classroom or during any instructional period including school assemblies and field trips.

1. Elementary Level – PDA is not allowed. Friendly hugs and handshakes between students are acceptable when resolving conflicts, when parting for weekends home, or when a student is leaving MSDB.

2. Middle School Level – Acceptable forms of PDA when students are at the middle school level include holding hands between classes or while walking across campus.
3. High School Level – Acceptable forms of PDA when students are at the high school level include middle school level allowances, quick kisses on the cheek (less than 5 seconds), and quick hugs (less than 5 seconds).
4. When there is a difference in levels of “dating” students, allowances default to youngest level of PDA allowance.

#### PDA in Cottage Settings

Students in the cottage settings are allowed to show PDA as listed in the Academic settings. Students who are in romantic relationships may also sit together side-by-side during free times and hold hands. With parent/guardian permission and meeting school and cottage behavior/grade expectations, high school students may go on off-campus dates.

#### PDA Infractions

Inappropriate displays of affection may form the basis for legitimate complaints of sexual harassment and other conduct code violations, and are subject to disciplinary action.

Staff may ask students to stop any touching, including PDA at any time. Students are expected to follow these requests immediately.

Conduct or behavior of a sexual nature is never allowed on campus or during any school-related function or activity. Consequences for infractions or violations will be handled by administrators and might possibly involve law enforcement.

#### Cross Reference:

#### Legal Reference:

#### Policy History:

Adopted on: 1/19/2018

Revised on: