

Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program**Definitions**

Sexual violence is a multi-layered oppression that occurs at the societal and individual level and is connected to and influenced by other forms of oppression, in particular, sexism, racism, and heterosexism. On the societal level, it is the preponderance of attitudes, actions, social norms that perpetuate and sustain environments and behaviors that promote a cultural tolerance, acceptance, and denial of sexual assault and abuse. On an individual level, sexual violence is a wide range of sexual acts and behaviors that are unwanted, coerced, committed without consent, or forced either by physical means or through threats.

Sexual abuse refers to coerced or forced sexual contact or activity that may be ongoing or occurs over time, often within a trusting relationship. Most victims know their perpetrators. Perpetrators are usually older than their victims and may trick or force them into gradually doing the sexual behavior. The sexual behavior may not be violent and may even be pleasurable to the child, who doesn't necessarily know it is wrong. Perpetrators of ongoing sexual abuse control the child/youth through secrecy, shame, or threats. Children cannot consent to sexual contact with adults or older youth, and sexual contact is considered abuse, regardless of whether it includes touching or not.

Sexual assault can be defined as any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs by force or without consent of the recipient of the unwanted sexual activity. This includes sexual activity such as forced sexual intercourse, forcible sodomy, child molestation, incest, fondling, and attempted rape. It includes sexual acts against people who are unable to consent either due to age or lack of capacity.

Program

The Bethany Public School District (District) shall implement the Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program (Program) identified or developed in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), in collaboration with the State Department of Education (SDE) and other assisting entities, with the goal of informing students and staff about child sexual abuse and assault awareness and available resources. The Program shall include, but is not limited to:

1. Providing mandatory training to all District staff to ensure they are fully informed on:
 - a. the warning signs of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct involving a child, including recognizing and reporting child sexual abuse,
 - b. mandatory reporting requirements,
 - c. prevention and identification of, and response to, child sexual abuse and assault,
 - d. bystander and appropriate interaction with children training programs,
 - e. District policies pertaining to sexual abuse and sexual misconduct,
 - f. establishing and maintaining professional relationships with students,
 - g. available resources for children affected by sexual abuse or misconduct, and
 - h. appropriate follow-up and care for abused students as they return to the classroom setting.

2. Providing students age-appropriate educational materials designed for children in grades kindergarten to six, inclusive, regarding child sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention that may include, but not be limited to:
 - a. The skills to recognize:
 - i. child sexual abuse and assault,
 - ii. boundary violations and unwanted forms of touching and contact, and
 - iii. ways offenders groom or desensitize victims.
 - b. Strategies to promote disclosure, reduce self-blame and mobilize bystanders.
 - c. Actions that child victims of sexual abuse and assault may take to obtain assistance.
 - d. Intervention and counseling options for child victims of sexual abuse and assault.
 - e. Access to educational resources to enable child victims of sexual abuse and assault to succeed in school.
 - f. Uniform procedures for reporting instances of child sexual abuse and assault to school staff members.

The lessons should be evidence-informed, developmentally and age-appropriate, and informed by the required curricula standards and performance indicators contained in the SDE Guidelines (Section Three).

3. Implementing a child sexual abuse curriculum to provide age-appropriate information to teach students the difference between appropriate and inappropriate conduct in situations where child sexual abuse or sexual assault could occur, and to identify actions a child may take to prevent and report sexual abuse or sexual assault. Students will be:
 - a. Provided with resources and referrals to handle these potentially dangerous situations.
 - b. Provided access to available counseling and educational support.

A student shall be excused from participating in the sexual abuse, assault awareness, and prevention program offered within the school, in its entirety or any part thereof, upon receipt by the school administration or designee, of a written request from the student's parent/guardian.

Any student exempted from the sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program shall be provided, during the period of time in which the student would otherwise be participating in such program, an opportunity for other study or academic work.

Reporting Child Sexual Abuse and Assault

Students shall be encouraged to disclose abuse to a trusted adult member of the staff, including, but not limited to, teachers, administrators, the nurse, coaches, and psychologists. Child abuse reporting procedures will be followed for all acts of violence and sexual abuse against children as delineated in Board policy and its accompanying regulations.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 17a-101, as amended requires all District employees or any other person, who in the performance of their duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to District students, who have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected, or placed at imminent risk of serious harm to report such abuse and/or neglect in compliance with applicable state statutes.

STUDENTS

5145.511(c)

An oral report by telephone or in-person shall be made as soon as possible but no later than twelve (12) hours to DCF and to the Superintendent or designee followed within forty-eight (48) hours by a written report to DCF.

Reporting suspected abuse and/or neglect of children, in addition to the requirements pertaining to staff training, record keeping, and dissemination of this policy shall be in accordance with the procedures established and set forth in the Administrative Regulation #5141.4.

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes § 17a-101q
 Public Ac 22-87

 A Statewide K-12 Sexual Assault and Abuse Prevention and Awareness Program developed by DCF, SDE, and Connecticut Alliance (The Alliance) to End Sexual Violence.

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