

SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT
Salem, Connecticut

STUDENTS

Exploitation; Sexual Harassment - Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program

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 usually refers to forced or unwanted sexual contact or activity that occurs as a single incident, as opposed to ongoing sexual abuse that may continue over time. It may also involve verbal or visual behaviors, or any type of pressure designed to coerce or force someone to join in the unwanted sexual contact or activity. The assault may involve a similar range of behaviors that are attempted or perpetrated against a victim's will or when a victim cannot consent because of age, disability, or the influence of alcohol or drugs. Sexual assault may involve actual or threatened physical force, use of weapons, coercion, intimidation or pressure. The offender usually takes advantage of the victim's vulnerability. Anyone can perpetrate this type of abuse – a trusted friend or family member, a stranger, a casual acquaintance, or an intimate partner.

Program

The Salem School District shall implement the Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program identified or developed, in compliance with CGS 17a-101q, by the Department of Children and Families, in collaboration with the Department of Education and other assisting entities, with the goal of informing students and staff about child sexual abuse and assault awareness and available resources. The District's implementation of the Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program, per statute, shall be not later than October 1, 2016. The program, for students in Grades K-12, inclusive, shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Providing teachers instructional modules that may include, but not be limited to:

- a. Training regarding the prevention and identification of, and response to, child sexual abuse and assault, and
 - b. Resources to further student, teacher and parental awareness regarding child sexual abuse and the prevention of such abuse and assault.
2. Providing students age-appropriate educational materials designed for children in grades kindergarten to twelve, 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.

The Board of Education directs the Superintendent develop administrative regulations to address the issues of students obtaining assistance, intervention and counseling options, access to educational resources and procedures for reporting instances of child sexual abuse and assault.

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 Principal or his/her 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, nurses, coaches, and counselors. Child abuse reporting procedures will be followed for all acts of violence and sexual abuse against children as delineated in policy #5141.4, "Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse," and its accompanying regulations.

Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101, as amended, requires all school employees including the Superintendent of Schools, school teachers, substitute teachers, administrators, school guidance counselors, school paraprofessionals, licensed nurses, physicians, psychologists, social workers, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, or any other person, who in the performance of his/her 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 in imminent risk of serious harm to report such abuse and/or neglect in compliance with applicable state statutes.

An oral report by telephone or in person shall be made as soon as possible but no later than 12 hours to the Commissioner of Children and Families and to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee followed within 48 hours by a written report to the Department of Children and Families.

(cf. 5131.2 – Bullying)

(cf. 5141.4 – Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse)

(cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes: 17a-101q Statewide sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program. 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. PA 22-87 An Act Concerning the Identification and Prevention of and Response to Adult Sexual Misconduct Against Children

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