

Students

Sexual Harassment

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 Woodstock Academy shall implement the Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program developed by the Department of Children and Families, with the goal of informing students and staff about child sexual abuse and assault awareness and available resources. The Woodstock Academy shall implement the program once provided by the State of Connecticut. The program shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Providing mandatory training to all Academy 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. Academy policies pertaining to sexual abuse and sexual misconduct,
 - d. Establishing and maintaining professional relationships with students,
 - e. Available resources for children affected by sexual abuse or misconduct, and
 - f. 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 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.
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 Head of School 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 in accordance with The Academy policies and procedures.

State law requires all school employees 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 in accordance with The Academy policies and procedures.

These policies and procedures require an oral report by telephone or in person to 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.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

P.A. 14-196, An Act Concerning a Statewide Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness Program

Policy adopted: June 23, 2015

The Woodstock Academy
Woodstock, Academy