

6 Steps for Preventing Adult Sexual Misconduct & Child Sexual Abuse.

[ESCAPE Program Logo: End Sexual abuse of Children with Prevention, Awareness and Education]

Educational Video Series. Developed in conjunction with Diane Cranley, an expert in child sexual abuse prevention. This module is part of a series designed to help school staff identify and report suspicious behaviors that may indicate child sexual abuse. A Discussion Guide accompanies each module of the series. A Collection of educational reading materials and resource lists are also included.

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Module 4: On-Site Behavioral Boundaries –Middle/High School

[Sources cited in this video are included at the end of the transcript]

Narrator, Diane Cranley: Hello, I'm Diane Cranley, Author of 8 Ways to Create Their Fate and a Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Consultant. Welcome back to the Adult Sexual Misconduct and Child Sexual Abuse Prevention in Schools Series.

Last time we were together we looked at on-site boundaries you can establish that directly intercede with child molester's attempts to isolate youth. Now let's look at boundaries that minimize inappropriate behavior of those who you allow to be with the students in your care.

Remember our intention is to intercede BEFORE abuse happens rather than just report after the fact and these suggested boundaries not only protect youth from potential abusers, they also protect educators and classified staff from being falsely accused.

Ban unprofessional behavior. The relationship between school personnel and the students they care for is strictly professional and their behavior should reflect that. Unprofessional behavior includes off-color comments, being flirtatious, snapping bra straps or underwear, giving preferential treatment to a specific student, going to the prom together, or hanging out with teens in their care. A relationship that seems too close or too casual should be a red flag.

Even compliments about clothing, hair, or make-up can be unprofessional if they focus on the person rather than the item - as an example "that's a cute haircut" versus "that haircut makes you look very mature for your age" or "that's a pretty dress" versus "wow that dress really hugs your body. "

Sources: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Establish a no intimidation - no manipulation policy. Child molesters use a variety of tactics to keep kids from disclosing abuse. These tactics include asking youth to keep secrets or telling them lies such as "your parents know we're 'together' and they're okay with it."

They may also coerce kids with threats of punishment or manipulate them with gifts, or offers of preferential treatment. Unfortunately, they may also threaten to HURT the child, their parents, or to abuse their siblings.

Sources: 1, 6, 7, 8

Prohibit casual or non-curricular sexual discussion, or exposing students to pornography or other sexually explicit material. Child molesters slowly desensitize youth to sexual acts by talking about sex

and using pornography. They may start by talking about sexual things such as body changes during puberty, wet dreams, masturbation, and the sensuality of other students or they may share details of their own sex life. Inappropriate sexual behaviors such as these are often carried out via text.

If any of these sexual behaviors come to light, it would indicate that sexual abuse is likely to occur. Child molesters use these behaviors to create complicity and test the waters to see if the student will keep the secret before they move on to contact sexual abuse. It's important to intercede right away.

Sources: 1, 2, 8, 9

Keep physical touch between staff and youth in your care to an absolute minimum. Off limits kinds of touch include; Kissing - even on the cheek, Massage - unless by a physical therapist and only in the presence of another adult, Stroking of hair or any other part of the body, Front-to-front or front-to-back hugs, use side hugs, high fives, or fist bumps instead, Sitting on laps, Physical horseplay, wrestling, or tickling, Assisted instruction that includes body-to-body touching such as batting or musical instruments and Excessive touching of any type. These limits on physical touch go in both directions - staff touching students or students touching staff.

Sources: 1, 10, 11

Establish appropriate locker room boundaries, because like bathrooms, locker rooms pose a high level of risk for youth to be sexually abused just because of the inherent exposure of intimate body parts.

Boundaries should include; No showering with students, No staff changing clothes in front of students, Multiple staff members present at all times, Staff members should monitor from a safe distance and not linger over specific youth

Sources: 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13

Formal boundaries are important because they allow everyone in the school community to be in agreement about what's right and wrong and they remove the need for individuals to have to decide in the moment. Like a restraining order, boundaries in and of themselves will not stop abuse but they do provide school administrators the right to enforce a boundary, which will indeed protect students.

We look forward to visiting with you again to talk about the remainder of our recommended behavioral boundaries.

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Which of these boundaries are already in place formally or informally and what needs to change to better protect the kids in your care?

Pause the video now and take a short break. When you are ready to continue, press Play.

Educational Video Series. Module 4: On Site Behavioral Boundaries – Middle/High School – Part 2.

In our last segment, we looked at a variety of on-site behavioral boundaries you can establish to protect the students in your care. Let's look at the rest of our recommended behavioral boundaries and talk about how you can enforce them to better protect youth. "Court records say the teen was hit by a ball in his groin while playing dodgeball in Turner's physical education class. Turner led the boy to the locker room, where he fondled the teen, according to the complaint."

Limit medical exams and treatment by staff members to treatment of minor injuries or dispensing of approved and properly packaged medications or in an area that is openly observable by other adults. More involved medical procedures should be handled by an outside medical professional. This will limit child molesters from using physically invasive examinations to disguise abuse. Any individualized medical treatment for special education students should be conducted in accordance with the student's individual education plan. (IEP)

Sources: 1

Prohibit staff from using alcohol or street drugs, or abusing prescription drugs, with students in your care. Child molesters often use drugs and alcohol to lower their own inhibitions as well as the inhibitions of youth. Research has found that substances may be used to get youth to comply with sexual activity or to confuse them, making any disclosure less credible. Child molesters may even use drugs to sedate other youth so they can focus on the abuse of a smaller number of victims.

Sources: 1, 2, 4, 6

There are many cases where photos start out as innocent but progress to provocative and then to indecent. When did it cross the line? We can't expect our youth to navigate the gray areas and slippery slope of this seductive grooming process. We need to set a boundary that is black and white so that everyone knows when it's being crossed.

Experts recommend is that you restrict employees from taking photographs of students unless it's part of specifically approved, publicly announced, school sanctioned events or programs, such as choir concerts, school plays, athletic events, or curriculum-related programs.

We understand that we live in a digital age and photographs are an integral part of life for our kids and for many of our teachers and their teaching process, but current news headlines clearly depict the danger of taking photos at school and the stricter your policy is, the safer your students will be.

You can provide additional protection for the students in your care by forbidding any device that has the capability of taking photos or videos in areas where there is an expectation of privacy such as bathrooms, changing areas, and locker rooms.

Sources: 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9

Establish a policy of no use of masks or blindfolds and no discussion or practice of bondage, scatting, fetishes, or rituals. While we would like to think that a preclusion of this type of behavior would be obvious and not need to be documented, we've had multiple cases in recent years of sexual abuse that included blindfolding students and bondage on school campuses. You may have infrequent exceptions to this boundary such as the drama club enacting Romeo and Juliet but these should be treated as the exception, not the rule and staff, students, and parents should be notified when such an exception is approved by school administrators. Sexual abuse that is organized, perpetrated by multiple people, or is part of a religious ritual, is much less common than single perpetrator abuse, especially with older children and teens. However, just the mention of these types of abuse can serve as a deterrent.

Experts recommend you include it in your boundaries and be sure not to disregard bizarre comments by students, instead follow up with a simple statement, "That's interesting, tell me more about that."

Sources: 1, 3, 5, 6

As dedicated school employees and volunteers who care for the health, wellbeing, and future of the students you serve, I'm sure it's disheartening to believe that sexual abuse is happening in our schools. As you can see, our efforts to educate you are more than just an academic or theoretical exercise. These headlines reflect stories of real children being hurt and it's up to all of us in the school community, especially those on campus with our students, to participate in the discussion of protecting their sexual innocence.

Please join us for our next segment on Off-Site Boundaries.

REFLECTON QUESTIONS:

How do your current policies and practices compare to these recommendations?

And what part can you play in preventing the sexual abuse of children in your care?

Thank you for taking the time to watch this video and engage with us in preventing child sexual abuse. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact your Human Resources Department.

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Sources Part 1

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Sources Part 2

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2. Robin Sax, *Predators and Child Molesters: What Every Parent Needs to Know to Keep Kids Safe: A Sex Crimes DA Answers 100 of the Most Asked Questions* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2009), 86.
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