

## 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 6: Off-Hours Boundaries-Elementary 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.

Child molesters need repeated access to children and schools provide that access. However, schools also provide structure and oversight which serve to deter and detect inappropriate behavior. Therefore, child molesters who have secured a trusted position within a school, leverage that trust to gain unrestricted access to students outside of school hours, which minimizes their risk of being caught.

Today we'll look at boundaries that restrict staff access to students during non-school hours which is a crucial yet often overlooked aspect of protecting children from sexual abuse in schools.

Source: 1, 2, 3

Prohibit planned interactions between staff and students outside of school sponsored and approved activities, without prior written agreement between the staff member, parent or guardian and a school administrator, based on a pre-existing affiliation.

Though we will identify some specific common ways child molesters gain access to students through school, it's impossible for us to name all of them so a general boundary is important.

Source: 1, 2, 3, 4

When unexpectedly running into students during off-hours, all on-site and off-site boundaries apply, especially NO: one adult – one child situations, physical touching, isolated locations, photographs of kids, or driving with kids.

Source: 1

Prohibit staff from babysitting children in your care or their siblings, paid or unpaid, without prior written agreement between the staff member, parent or guardian and a school administrator, based on a pre-existing affiliation. One study found that 48 percent of the child molesters interviewed obtained access to their victims through babysitting. This is a real and present danger.

Source: 1, 5, 6

Prohibit staff from offering personal tutoring services to children in your school or their siblings, paid or unpaid, without prior written agreement between the staff member, parent or guardian and a school administrator, based on a pre-existing affiliation. Instead we encourage you to meet students' tutoring needs by offering this service as part of your regularly scheduled program with multiple adults present where children can be protected by all other on-site boundaries. If permission is granted by a school administrator, personal tutoring services should occur in the presence of the student's parent or legal guardian.

Source: 1, 7

Prohibit staff from visiting a student's home and from having students at their home, without prior written agreement between the staff member, parent or guardian and a school administrator, based on a pre-existing affiliation. Child molesters will look for excuses to visit a child's home – so even seemingly innocent visits such as dropping off a backpack the child left at school can open a door that presents increased risk.

Source: 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11

Prohibit sleepovers with staff and students outside of school sponsored and approved programs, without prior written agreement between the staff member, parent or guardian and a school administrator, based on a pre-existing affiliation. Overnight visits present increased risk because even if there are multiple kids, or even multiple adults, kids are more vulnerable to abuse when everyone else in the house is sleeping.

Source: 1, 3, 5, 11, 12

Prohibit staff from attending student's birthday parties, without prior written agreement between the staff member, parent or guardian and a school administrator, based on a pre-existing nexus. Although kids may want their favorite school staff to come to their birthday parties, it provides yet another entree for child molesters to gain access to the family and pursue further off-hours access to the kids.

Source: 1

Prohibit staff from attending family gatherings of the kids in your care, without prior written agreement between the staff member, parent or guardian and a school administrator, based on a pre-existing affiliation. Remember we talked about the relationship between staff and students being strictly professional? While it may seem sad, especially in small close-knit communities, we must caution you not to allow this type of extended relationship to develop between your staff and the families of the kids in your care. This is exactly the type of access child molesters are looking for and will surely exploit.

Source: 1

Boundaries that manage staff's access to students during non-working hours are an important, yet unfortunate step in protecting students from child molesters who seek school positions, specifically with the intent to harm children. Parents believe that someone who works for the school is safe and may even perceive their employment as a formal endorsement from the district. Families can be unsuspecting and therefore the school needs to set these clear boundaries.

Though the boundaries themselves may not stop the abuse, they will establish a common expectation among staff, parents, and students and empower administrators to intervene, hopefully before abuse happens. Join us for our next segment when we'll discuss the importance of boundaries that manage electronic and social media communication between staff and students.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What are the common expectations your staff, parents, and children have regarding when and how staff interact with students during non-school hours?

How might those practices be exploited by someone with an intent to sexually abuse children?

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:

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