

Exploitation: Sexual Harassment**Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program****Definitions**

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.

EASTCONN shall:

1. Providing mandatory training to all EASTCONN 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. EASTCONN 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.

[Note: Above items a, b, c, d, e, and f are required per P.A. 14-196.]

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 Executive Director of EASTCONN, 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 EASTCONN 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 Executive Director of EASTCONN or his/her designee followed within 48 hours by a written report to the Department of Children and Families.

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 #5151.4.

(cf. 5131.911 - 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 (as amended by Section 415 of the June 2015 Special Session Public Act 15-5)

Policy adopted: November 26, 2019

_____ Public Schools

_____, Connecticut

Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program

Student Program Opt-Out Form

Connecticut Law, Public Act 14-196, mandates that schools provide age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education in Kindergarten through Grade 12. EASTCONN will be utilizing instructional modules and developmentally appropriate educational material in each school and in all grades.

The age-appropriate materials for students may include skills in recognizing child sexual abuse and assault, boundary violations and unwanted forms of touching and contact, and ways offenders groom or desensitize victims and strategies to promote disclosure, reduce self-blame and mobilize bystanders.

In addition, the instructions will include actions child victims may take to get help, intervention and counseling options for child victims, access to educational resources to help child victims succeed in school and uniform procedures for reporting instances for child sexual abuse and assault to school staff.

The law allows students to opt-out of the awareness program or any part of it if the student's parent or guardian so notifies EASTCONN in writing.

Please sign this form **ONLY** if you **DO NOT** want your child to participate in this program.

Child's Name: _____

Child's Grade: _____ Child's Teacher:

I DO NOT want my child, named above, to participate in the sexual abuse awareness and prevention program that will be conducted by _____ Agency.

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

This form must be received at school by _____

If a parent/guardian does not submit this opt-out form, the student will participate in the program.

Students who do not participate in this program will be provided opportunities for study and/or school work when the student would otherwise be participating in the program.