

School Policy Through A Survivor Lens

Educate your school community about your policy on prevention of, intervention in, and response to dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

- Does your staff training curriculum include required training on healthy relationships and responding to abuse? Are school staff members trained on their role in preventing, intervening in, and responding to dating abuse, etc.?
- How do teachers and staff incorporate the topic of healthy relationships and abuse into the curriculum? How do you educate and engaged parents/guardians about relationship health and abuse?
- Do educators, staff, administrators, and parents in your school community know about your policies and procedures related to dating violence, sexual abuse, and stalking?



Create disciplinary processes that hold students who have been abusive appropriately accountable and provides early interventions.

- Does your disciplinary process specifically prohibit dating violence? Sexual assault? Stalking? How are these terms defined?
- If dating violence is prohibited, does the definition include a pattern of abusive behaviors that may not be prohibited as single actions?
- Does your policy take into consideration the history of the students' relationship when an incident of abuse is alleged?
- Does your disciplinary policy include early interventions for students who are exhibiting problematic behavior that falls short of prohibited behavior?

Create disciplinary processes that offer survivors meaningful and safe opportunities to engage.

- How does a student who has survived abuse participate in the disciplinary process? Is a survivor allowed or required to testify or to provide a written account? Is the survivor allowed to have his/her parent/guardian or an attorney or advocate present?
- How is the survivor notified of the outcome of a disciplinary process? Does a survivor have a right to appeal a decision or otherwise ask that it is reconsidered?
- Does your code of conduct include a statement of victim/survivor's rights?
- Does your process ensure that the student survivor and the student who has perpetrated abusive behavior are met with separately? Does your policy allow survivors to opt out of peer mediation or restorative justice in cases of dating violence, sexual violence, or stalking?

Provide a grievance process and accommodations for student survivors that enhance safety and encourage academic success.

- Can a student survivor or a student's parent/guardian file a grievance to request accommodations from the school? Can he/she file a grievance to request a disciplinary action against another student who has been abusive?
- Does your school provide accommodations for student survivors (e.g., schedule changes, leave to meet with counselors, excused absence for classes missed due to abuse, or school transfer)?

- Can a student make the request for accommodations orally and in writing? Can s/he make it to any school employee?
- Are there accommodations that can be made for a student survivor without the notification or involvement of the student's parent/guardian?
- Does your policy allow a student to request an accommodation without naming the abusive student? Without notifying the abusive student?
- What is your school's procedure for enforcing civil orders of protection or criminal stay away orders issued for or against a student?

Develop mandated reporting policies that contemplate dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

- Does your school's mandated reporting policy detail what types of abuse must be reported, to whom, and by whom?
- Does your policy require reporting even when the state law does not require it.
- Does your policy require a report when a minor is abused (physically or sexually) by someone who is not guardian caregiver? Or anyone, including a peer?
- Does your policy require a report for "statutory rape" and, if so, how does it define statutory rape? Does statutory rape include a minor engaging in consensual sexual activity with a same-aged peer? Does it include a minor engaging in consensual sexual activity with an older partner and, if so, how much older must the partner be?
- At what point during the reporting process is a student's parent/guardian involved? What role do the student and parent/guardian have in making the report?
- Do you alert students about the mandatory reporting requirements before they disclose information about their situation?

Create confidentiality policies that encourage survivors to get help.

- Does your school have a policy about sharing information about a student survivor?
- Does your policy comply with the confidentiality provisions of VAWA?
- Does your school have a "need to know" or other type of policy that restricts information-sharing beyond any federal and state requirements? Does your policy offer guidance about how a student's information should be shared? When and with whom it should be shared?
- When your school works with a community organization to support a student survivor, what type of release of information is required? Who signs it? The student? The parent/guardian?

Engage with students' parents/guardians in a way that supports survivors and encourages healthy relationships.

- Can a student survivor ask for help (see a counselor or ask for accommodation) without the student's parent/guardian being notified, giving permission, or participating?
- Is a student alerted before the parent/guardian is notified or involved? Can the student be part of the notification process?
- If a parent/guardian is involved, how much information is shared with them? What happens if a student wants specific information withheld?
- What information are students told about the potential for their parent/guardian to be involved? What information are parents/guardians told about their rights to information about the student?
- Is there a process in place to determine whether it is safe to involve a student's parent/guardian? Is there an opt-out procedure if a student believes that notification will be dangerous?