

## **Policy against Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Violence**

Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Violence disrupts a school's ability to educate students and threatens public safety by creating an atmosphere in which such behavior can escalate into violence. Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Violence is prohibited in the Collaborative schools and programs, RI [R.I.G.L. § 16-21-30].

It is the policy of the Collaborative that all students and program participants be treated with respect. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Raise school/program-wide awareness about teen dating violence and sexual violence
- Provide direction in responding to incidents
- Prevent new incidents of dating violence and sexual violence.

At all times, all staff of the Collaborative will model correct and courteous behavior to each other, to students, program participants, and to visitors to the school and Collaborative program sites. Abusive or humiliating language or demeanor will not be accepted. An effort will be made to ensure that each student/program participant is well known by at least one staff member so that the student/program participant will have someone to turn to if abuse develops. To the extent possible the influence of cliques and other exclusive school/program groupings will be diminished by the creation of a range of inclusive school/program activities in which students/program participants will be encouraged to participate [R.I.G.L. 16-38-4. Exclusive clubs].

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued regulations under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 entitled Sexual Harassment and Title IX of the Education Act of 1972, Anti-Discrimination Laws.

**This Policy Should Be Read in Conjunction with the Collaborative's Statewide Bullying Policy, AntiDiscrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedure and Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Discrimination Based on Disability Policy.**

### **Definitions:**

**Dating Violence:** Dating violence is a pattern of behavior where one person uses threats of, or actually uses physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse to control his or her dating partner.

**Sexual Assault:** Sexual assault includes 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 and may include:

- Intentional touching of someone in ways that are unwanted
- Voyeurism
- Exposure to exhibitionism

- Undesired exposure to pornography
- Public display of images that were taken in a private context or when the victim was unaware.

**At School:** In the context of these regulations, the phrase at school includes the following places and situations:

- In any location of the school or offsite location utilized by the Collaborative Schools and Programs (classroom, lavatory, locker room, gymnasium, offsite facility, Program Training Apartment, etc.)
- Anywhere on school/collaborative facility
- Immediately adjacent to school/ collaborative facility
- On a school bus or other school/collaborative vehicle
- At school bus stops
- While students are walking to or from school
- At any school/program-sponsored activity or event, whether or not held on school/facility premises

**Disciplinary Sanctions:** As a school community, we believe in progressive discipline to educate our students. Repeated offenses will result in more severe consequences. Disciplinary consequences will be determined on a case-by-case basis and reflect the number and severity of disciplinary issues. Parents are important partners in the disciplinary process. Communication with parents will be open and frequent as we work together to solve disciplinary issues for the safety and well-being of our students.

Disciplinary Sanctions for teen dating violence and sexual violence may include:

- Loss of the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities
- Loss of the opportunity to participate in school/program social activities
- Loss of the opportunity to participate in graduation exercises
- Loss of school bus/program transportation
- Transfer to another school or exclusion from Collaborative Program
- Assignment of additional community/school service
- Classroom/Program exclusion
- Short term school/program suspension (10 or fewer days of suspension) or long term suspension (suspension of more than 10 days)
- Admonitions, warnings and counseling

**Reporting Procedures:** The Collaborative shall establish a procedure for reporting, filing, and acting upon reports of incidents of teen dating violence and sexual violence. The procedure will be publicized to staff, parents, students, and volunteers. The person(s) responsible for reporting are:

- The victim
- Anyone who witnessed any act covered by this policy
- Anyone with credible information that an act covered by this policy is or has taken place

A complaint form is attached to this policy, the Collaborative Employee Manual and on the Collaborative website. Additional forms can be found in every classroom, School Social Worker's Office and Building Administrator's office. Reports should be made to an adult within the Collaborative Schools or Programs.

**Administrator and Staff Training:** The Collaborative shall provide training on the Collaborative's teen dating violence and sexual violence policy to all staff who have significant contact with students, including educators, behavior specialists, teacher assistants, program supervisors, employment specialists, program coordinators, vocational evaluator, program facilitators, job coaches, school nurses and mental health staff, administrators, custodial and food service staff, and parents.

Per the *Lindsay Ann Burke Act*, the training shall specifically include, but not be limited to:

- Basic principles and warning signs of dating violence
- The Collaborative teen dating violence and sexual violence policy

**Student Education:** Ongoing age-appropriate education on healthy relationships shall be provided to all students in grades K-12, with specific instruction relating to teen dating violence taught yearly in grades 7-12. Per the *Lindsay Ann Burke Act* this curriculum shall include but not be limited to:

- Defining teen dating violence
- Recognizing dating violence warning signs
- Characteristics of healthy relationships

Additionally, students shall be provided with the Collaborative's teen dating violence and sexual violence prevention policy. Upon written request to the school Building Administrator or Program Administrator by a parent or legal guardian of a pupil less than eighteen (18) years of age and within a reasonable period of time after the request is made, said parent or legal guardian shall be permitted to examine the health education instruction materials at the school in which his or her child is enrolled.

**Social Skills Training:** The Collaborative school health program and school counseling services will include appropriate social skills training to help students avoid isolation and to help them interact in a healthy manner.

**Responsibility of Students:** Students who observe any act covered by this policy or who have reasonable grounds to believe an act is taking or has taken place in violation of this policy are obligated to report the incident to school/program authorities. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

**Investigation:** The Building Administrator or Program Administrator or his or her designee shall investigate all allegations of acts in violation of this policy. If the allegation is found to be credible, appropriate disciplinary sanctions, subject to appropriate due process procedures, will

be imposed. The investigation will include an assessment by the appropriate school personnel of the effect the incident has had on the victim.

**Police Notification:** When the act involves conduct that involves criminal law, the police will be notified.

**Help for the Victim:** If the investigation determines the victim's mental health has been placed at risk, appropriate referrals will be made. If the incident included a violent criminal offense, the victim will be informed of any school/program transfer rights he or she may have under the Federal No Child Left Behind Act.

**Prohibition Against Retaliation:** Retaliation or threats of retaliation in any form designed to intimidate a victim, those who are witnesses to an incident, or those investigating the incident, shall not be tolerated. In most cases, retaliation or threat of retaliation will result in imposition of a short or long-term school/program suspension. In appropriate cases, Building Administrators or Program Administrators will refer to [R.I.G.L. 11-42-2. Extortion and Blackmail] [R.I.G.L. 59-2 Stalking Prohibited].

**Prohibition Against False Reporting:** False reports of acts covered by this policy will be subject to appropriate school/program discipline, including short and long term suspension from school/program.

**Individualized School Safety Plan:** If a student is the victim of an act in violation of this policy and as a result, does not feel safe in his or her school environment, the Building Administrator or Program Administrator will prepare a written school safety plan outlining what steps will be taken to provide the student with a safe educational environment. This plan will be developed, if possible, with input from the parents of the student. Staff members who are to implement the plan will help formulate it.