

This resource is one of many available to you through the *Second Step* Child Protection Unit, a comprehensive school-based child protection program, which includes staff training, student lessons, and family resources. Access additional free resources on child sexual abuse prevention for parents at [earlyopenoften.org](http://earlyopenoften.org).

## Fact Sheet on Staff Sexual Misconduct with Children

### Staff Version

#### What is staff sexual misconduct?

“Staff sexual misconduct” covers any criminal or noncriminal sexualized behaviors between an adult working or volunteering in a school, early learning center, or youth-serving program and a child. It includes all behaviors of a sexual nature considered inappropriate in your code of conduct or child sexual abuse under state criminal codes.

#### Who are the abusers?

- Adult staff members who sexually abuse children are mostly men
- They repeatedly abuse one child after another, often over a period of many years
- They carefully and deliberately select children, befriend them, build trust with them, and then proceed to engage in sexual interactions. This process is called “grooming”
- They also build trust with or groom other adults in the community, for example, the principal, director, teachers, other staff members, and parents
- Often they are respected as valuable members of the staff

#### What are their grooming patterns with children?

*Pattern 1:* Targeting one child with extra attention (for example, to help with reading, sports, and so on)

*Pattern 2:* Targeting one child to be a helper

#### Offenders will often do the following to groom a child:

- Meet alone with the targeted child before, during, or after school or program hours
- Build a relationship with this child’s parents
- Go to the child’s house
- Give the child or family gifts
- Act like an uncle or family friend

#### Where does the abuse happen?

- In closets, bathrooms, locker rooms, storage rooms, offices, music rooms, and other secluded places
- In rooms behind locked doors or with window blinds drawn
- During movies or activities where the child is sitting on the adult’s lap
- While playing what the offenders call “games,” often with blindfolds, including touching games

#### Remember:

- If you suspect staff sexual misconduct, follow your reporting procedures
- If you feel something is wrong, trust that feeling—abusers will try to groom you to ignore it.
- You need to act to protect the child

## What are behaviors that might be red flags for possible abuse?

- Violations of your code of conduct. Some common violations are:
  - Inappropriate touching, either the type of touch or the frequency of the touch
  - Meeting alone with a child behind a closed door
  - Driving a child places without the school or program's knowledge
- Personal contact with the child using social media, email, texting, and so on
- Favoring an individual child
- Violations of your safe environment policy, such as:
  - Covering over windows
  - Closing or locking doors