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