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# INFORMATION FOR CONTRACTORS: CHILD ABUSE, SEXUAL CONDUCT, AND ADULT-STUDENT BOUNDARIES

2021-2022

# INTRODUCTION

- This presentation will provide you with valuable information about a variety of situations you might encounter while providing contracted services with the Salem-Keizer School District.
- If you have any questions about the content of this presentation, please contact Debbie Joa, Prevention and Protection Coordinator, at 503-399-3061.
- Topics:
  - Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect
  - Preventing Sexual Conduct and Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries with Students



# Recognizing and Responding to Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Below you will find a link to a video created by the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS). This video will provide you with valuable information on recognizing and responding to child abuse. Please watch the video in its entirety. If you experience any difficulties in accessing the video, please contact Debbie Joa, the District's Prevention and Protection Coordinator, at 503-399-3061 or [joa\\_debbie@salkeiz.k12.or.us](mailto:joa_debbie@salkeiz.k12.or.us).

Link directly to the [video](#).

Or, access the video through the [DHS website](#).

**Mandatory Reporting  
of Child Abuse:**  
An Oregon Training Video



# HOW DO I RECOGNIZE CHILD ABUSE?

The DHS video provided valuable information for recognizing child maltreatment, including the following:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
- Neglect
- Mental Injury
- Threat of Harm

# RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE

- Physical abuse is defined as any injury to a child that is not accidental. The injury may be observable, such as a bruise or broken bone. Or, the injury may be internal and not easily observed. It is important to report suspicious physical injuries or suspicious circumstances.
- Sexual abuse involves any sexual contact between an adult and a minor. The sexual contact could be physical or could involve exposing the child to pornography or sexual activity. It also includes sexual contact between minors if there is an imbalance in power or the contact is likely to be harmful to one or both of the minors. Sexual abuse is not limited to situations involving an adult and a child. “An adult could be charged with sexual abuse if the victim is over 18 years old but is incapable of consent due to being ‘mentally defective, mentally incapacitated or physically helpless’ (ORS 163.427).”

# GROOMING AND SEXUAL ABUSE

- Sexual offenders often engage in a process called “grooming.”
- Grooming is the process by which an offender attempts to emotionally engage and desensitize the victim.
- Grooming involves purposeful, calculated behavior to “set up” the child for abuse.
- It is important to remember that offenders not only manipulate children, they also manipulate and “groom” family members, friends, employees/volunteers in youth serving organizations, etc.

Visit **Darkness to Light** for important information about grooming and child sexual abuse:

<https://www.d2l.org/child-grooming-signs-behavior-awareness/>

# RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE



- Neglect could include failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, or medical care, and results in actual harm or is likely to harm a child. Chronic neglect is a persistent pattern of family functioning in which the parent or caregiver does not sustain or meet the basic needs of a child.
- Mental Injury: Cruel or unconscionable acts or statements made by the caregiver that have a direct effect on the child, or a caregiver's failure to provide nurturance, protection, or appropriate guidance.
- Threat of Harm: A caregiver who subjects a child to a substantial risk of harm to their health or welfare.

Child abuse is also defined in the Oregon Revised Statutes: [Oregon Revised Statute 419B.005](#)

# REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- If you become aware of possible child abuse or neglect through your contracted services with the District, **immediately report your concerns to the school administrator, school counselor, teacher, or another school district employee.**
- Everyone, including District contractors, are encouraged to **report suspected child abuse** to the Oregon Department of Human Services/Child Welfare (**1-855-503-7233**) or a law enforcement agency.
- Individuals in some professions, including all school district employees, are **mandated by law to report** suspected child abuse and neglect to DHS/Child Welfare or law enforcement.

# RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

- If a child discloses abuse, it is important that you remain as calm as possible. A child may interpret a strong emotional reaction to mean they did something wrong and shouldn't talk about it. The child may recant (take back) their statements or not be willing to share the information with anyone else.
- Children and teens often believe the abuse was their fault. Statements such as “I believe you” and “It wasn't your fault” can be very powerful for the child to hear.
- It is important for contractors to keep child abuse information confidential and only share the information with ODHS, law enforcement and/or school employees who need to know.
- Remember, it is not your role to question the child or to investigate; report your suspicions to the proper authorities so they may begin an investigation.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



## What You Can Do About Child Abuse



For additional information on recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect, see the Oregon Department of Human Services publication, “What you can do about child abuse”:  
<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/de9061.pdf>

# Preventing Sexual Conduct and Maintaining Appropriate Adult-Student Boundaries

# CONTRACTOR EXPECTATIONS

- Positive and supportive relationships between school district contractors and students are crucial. It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that the nature of the relationship remains focused on the well-being of the student and the student's educational needs.
- While the intent of a contractor's actions is important, it is also important that contractors avoid the appearance of impropriety. Each situation and each child is unique so please contact the school administrator/department supervisor, school counselor, or classroom teacher if you have questions or concerns. In addition, you may contact Debbie Joa, Prevention and Protection Coordinator for the Salem-Keizer School District, at 503-399-3061.

# ADULT-CHILD BOUNDARIES

- Appropriate Interactions create a safe environment for students to learn, grow, seek help in problem solving and conflicts, and develop social skills.
- Inappropriate Interactions cross the boundaries separating student from adult needs and create relationships that become peer-to-peer rather than adult-to-child.
- The following slide will provide you with examples of interactions between an employee, contractor or volunteer and a student that would not be appropriate.

# INAPPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES

It is never appropriate for a school district employee, contractor or volunteer to date a student. Report concerns to the school administrator.

- Examples of “red flag” behaviors:
  - Contractors giving gifts to students.
  - Contractors driving students in personal vehicles without prior permission from the school administrator and without following District policy.
  - Contractors meeting with students off campus without a legitimate educational purpose and without prior permission from the school administrator.
  - Contractors communicating with students on personal social networking sites (with the exception of the contractor’s family members).
  - Contractors communicating with students via email, telephone or texting when there is not a legitimate educational purpose and without prior permission from the school administrator.
  - Contractors asking students to give them hugs or volunteers giving students frontal hugs.
  - Contractors tickling students, giving shoulder massages, or allowing lap sitting.

# EXERCISING CAUTION REGARDING ONE-TO-ONE CONTACT WITH STUDENTS



- Whenever possible, employees, contractors, and volunteers are expected to meet with students in public areas of the school or meet with students when others are present. This is good practice for everyone involved.
- This extends into the virtual world. It is important for employees, contractors and volunteers to ensure that interactions with students in the virtual environment are as transparent as possible.
- Depending on their position, an employee or contractor may occasionally need to discuss sensitive information with a student that would not be appropriate for others to hear. Contractors should give careful consideration to the physical and/or virtual environment and be as transparent as possible. Situations involving one contractor and one student must be observable and interruptible.

# EMPLOYEE AND CONTRACTOR'S EMOTIONAL NEEDS



It is important that employees and contractors are cognizant of their own emotional needs and how those needs could impact their interactions with students.

It would not be appropriate for an employee or contractor to confide in a student about the employee's relationship problems or rely on the student for emotional support.

Be vigilant about your relationships and interactions with students. Employees or contractors who begin "blurring the line" are at risk for continuing on a path of unethical, if not illegal, conduct.

Additional information is available from the  
Pennsylvania Professional Standards and Practices Commission.



# CONDUCT BY SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, AGENTS, VOLUNTEERS & STUDENTS

- In order to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, the Oregon Legislature recently passed legislation ([Senate Bill 155](#)) that required school districts to enact specific policies and rules for the prevention and investigation of suspected child abuse and sexual conduct by school district employees, contractors, agents, volunteers, and students.
- In accordance with Salem-Keizer School District Policy (PAP-A001 “Child Abuse and Sexual Conduct”), child abuse and sexual conduct of students by District employees, contractors, agents, or volunteers and child abuse by students is not tolerated. All reports will be investigated.

# CONDUCT BY SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, AGENTS, VOLUNTEERS & STUDENTS

- **Sexual Conduct** is defined by the Oregon legislature as:
  - Any verbal or physical conduct or verbal, written, or electronic communications by a school district employee, a contractor, an agent, or a volunteer that involve a student and that are:
    - sexual advances or requests for sexual favors directed toward the student or;
    - of a sexual nature that are directed toward the student or that have the effect of unreasonably interfering with the student's educational performance, or of creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment

# CONDUCT BY SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, AGENTS, VOLUNTEERS & STUDENTS

- Sexual conduct does not include:
  - Touching or other physical contact that is necessitated by the nature of the school district employee's job duties or by the services required to be provided by the contractor, agent or volunteer and for which there is no sexual intent; or
  - Verbal, written or electronic communications that are provided as part of the education program that meets state educational standards or District policy..
- The definition of sexual conduct does not apply to conduct or communications by current K-12 students who work, contract or volunteer for the Salem-Keizer School District and are in a consensual relationship with another K-12 student as long as the conduct does not create an intimidating or hostile education environment, and is not prohibited by law, District policies, or any applicable employment agreements.

# CONDUCT BY SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, AGENTS, VOLUNTEERS & STUDENTS

- **Student** is defined as any person who is:
  - In any grade from prekindergarten through grade 12; or
  - Twenty-one years of age or younger and receiving educational or related services from an education provider that is not a post-secondary institution of education; or
  - Who was previously known as a student by the person engaging in sexual conduct and who left school or graduated from high school within 90 days prior to the sexual conduct.

# REPORTING CONCERNS

- It is important that everyone take an active role in helping to ensure a safe and healthy environment for students.
- Be observant. If you **observe or hear about questionable behavior** between an adult and child, **immediately notify** the principal or assistant principal, or contact Debbie Joa, the District's Prevention and Protection Coordinator, at 503-399-3061.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- For more information regarding appropriate adult-student boundaries, talk with the school administrator or contact:

Debbie Joa, Prevention and Protection Coordinator

503-399-3061

[joa\\_debbie@salkeiz.k12.or.us](mailto:joa_debbie@salkeiz.k12.or.us)

- Maintaining Appropriate Staff-Student Boundaries (Guidance for Staff):

<https://mk0salkeizk12or7kyfk.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/QAM-docs/PAP-W006-Maintaining-Appropriate-Student-Boundaries.pdf>

- Guide to Staff-Student Interaction (Information for Parents/Guardians):

<https://mk0salkeizk12or7kyfk.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/HUM-W039-Staff-and-Student-Interactions.pdf>

- Volunteers: Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries:

<https://mk0salkeizk12or7kyfk.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/pap-w016.pdf>

## FINAL THOUGHTS

There are many agencies in the community working together to help ensure the safety of students. Your role as a Salem-Keizer School District contractor is vital. Thank you for the positive impact you have on students every day.

