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

2021-2022
This presentation will provide you with valuable information about a variety of situations you might encounter during your volunteer service 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
**Oregon Revised Statute 419B.005 defines child abuse as:**

- Any assault, as defined in ORS chapter 163, of a child and any physical injury to a child which has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury which appears to be at variance with the explanation given of the injury.
- Any mental injury to a child, which shall include only observable and substantial impairment of the child's mental or psychological ability to function caused by cruelty to the child, with due regard to the culture of the child.
- Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including but not limited to the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care that is likely to endanger the health or welfare of the child.
- Threatened harm to a child, which means subjecting a child to a substantial risk of harm to the child’s health or welfare.
- Buying or selling a person under 18 years of age as described in ORS 163.537.
- Permitting a person under 18 years of age to enter or remain in or upon premises where methamphetamines are being manufactured.
- Unlawful exposure to a controlled substance, as defined in ORS 475.005, that subjects a child to a substantial risk of harm to the child’s health or safety.
HOW DO I RECOGNIZE CHILD ABUSE?

Oregon Revised Statute 419B.005 defines child abuse as:

- Rape of a child, which includes but is not limited to rape, sodomy, unlawful sexual penetration and incest, as those acts are described in ORS chapter 163.
- Sexual abuse, as described in ORS chapter 163.
- Sexual exploitation, including but not limited to:
  - Contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor, as defined in ORS chapter 163, and any other conduct which allows, employs, authorizes, permits, induces or encourages a child to engage in the performing for people to observe or the photographing, filming, tape recording or other exhibition which, in whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct or contact, as defined in ORS 167.002 or described in ORS 163.665 and 163.670, sexual abuse involving a child or rape of a child, but not including any conduct which is part of any investigation conducted pursuant to ORS 419B.020 or which is designed to serve educational or other legitimate purposes; and
  - Allowing, permitting, encouraging or hiring a child to engage in prostitution as described in ORS 167.007 or a commercial sex act as described in ORS 163.266, to purchase sex with a minor as described in ORS 163.413 or to engage in commercial sexual solicitation as described in ORS 167.008.
HOW DO I RECOGNIZE CHILD ABUSE?

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

- If you are unsure if an injury is due to abuse, consider the following questions:
  - Does the explanation match the injury?
  - Did the child give multiple explanations for the injury?
  - Did the child and caregiver give different explanations for the injury?
  - Is there a pattern of injury? Does it look like it was caused by a belt loop, cigarette burn, hand, coat hanger, etc?
  - Where is the injury?

- It is important to report suspicious physical injuries or suspicious circumstances.
SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- 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… (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](https://www.d2l.org/child-grooming-signs-behavior-awareness/) for important information about grooming and child sexual abuse:
Of all types of abuse incidences, neglect was the most frequently identified type of abuse (42.3%), followed by threat of harm (39.9%).

Neglect could include failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, or medical care.

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.

Neglect results in actual harm to the child or is likely to harm a child.
MENTAL INJURY / EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- **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.

- The caregiver’s behavior (intentional or unintentional) is related to a substantial and observable impairment of the child’s well being and functioning.

- Examples could include:
  - A parent who consistently “puts” down the child, calling them “stupid” and “worthless”.
  - A caregiver who threatens to harm the child’s pet if the child misbehaves.
  - A legal guardian who is trespassed from the school after repeatedly verbally berating staff and students at school functions.
THREAT OF HARM

- **Threat of Harm**: A caregiver who subjects a child to a substantial risk of harm to their health or welfare.

- “Substantial” can be difficult to define. Err on the side of student safety and discuss the caregiver’s acts/statements with DHS/Child Welfare or law enforcement.

- **Examples could include:**
  - A child who is exposed to domestic violence
  - A parent who sends their child to buy drugs for the parent
  - A child living in a home where someone is involved in child pornography
REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- If you become aware of possible child abuse or neglect through your volunteer activities with the District, immediately report your concerns to the school administrator, school counselor, teacher, another school district employee.

- Everyone, including volunteers, are encouraged to report suspected child abuse to the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS)/Child Abuse Hotline (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 ODHS or law enforcement.
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 volunteers 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.
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

Video resource, “DHS Mandatory Reporting for Child Abuse”:
https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/ABUSE/Pages/mandatory_report.aspx
Preventing Sexual Conduct and Maintaining Appropriate Adult-Student Boundaries
VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

- The involvement of dedicated volunteers is crucial to student success.
- Volunteers have the primary purpose of supporting academic activities and/or school activities.
- School district employees, contractors, agents, and volunteers must maintain appropriate boundaries with students at all times.
- Each situation and each child is unique so please contact the school administrator, 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.
Tips for Volunteers

- Focus conversations on academics, school events and school activities; refer personal issues to the school administrator, counselor or classroom teacher; refrain from making comments that could have sexual overtones.
- Stay in a group or a public part of the school; avoid being alone with a student.
- Treat all students fairly and equally; avoid favoritism such as special privileges or gifts.
- Limit interactions to the school environment; don’t meet with students outside of school or communicate with students electronically (text messaging, social networking sites, e-mail, etc.).
- Maintain personal space and reasonable eye contact.
- Be cautious about physical contact with students, contact including but not limited to: lap sitting, tickling, frontal hugs and shoulder massages are not appropriate.

Appropriate interactions create a SAFE ENVIRONMENT for STUDENTS to LEARN, grow, seek help in PROBLEM SOLVING and conflicts, and DEVELOP social skills.

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 questionable behavior between an adult and child or between children IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY the school administrator, counselor or classroom teacher.

Inappropriate interactions cross the boundaries separating student from adult needs and create relationships that become peer-to-peer rather than adult-to-child.

For more information on maintaining appropriate boundaries with students contact:

Salem-Keizer Public Schools
Prevention and Protection Coordinator
Debbie Joo at 503-399-3061

More detailed training is available on the Salem-Keizer School District website:
www.salemkeiz.k12.or.us/volunteering
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 slides will provide you with examples of interactions between an employee, contractor or volunteer and a student that would **not** be appropriate.
Examples of “red flag” behaviors:

- Giving gifts to students.
- Driving students in personal vehicles without prior permission from the school administrator and without following District policy.
- Meeting with students off campus without a legitimate educational purpose and without prior permission from the school administrator.
- Communicating with students on personal social networking sites or online gaming (with the exception of the volunteer’s family members).
Examples of “red flag” behaviors (continued):

- Communicating with students via email, telephone or texting when there is not a legitimate educational purpose and without prior permission from the school administrator.

- Asking students to give them hugs or volunteers giving students frontal hugs.

- Tickling students, giving shoulder massages, or allowing lap sitting.

- It is never appropriate for a volunteer to date a student or talk with a student about having a more personal relationship once they turn 18 or graduate.
In order to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, the Oregon Legislature recently passed legislation (Senate Bill 155) mandating that school districts 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 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.
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.
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

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

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

Volunteers: Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries:
FINAL THOUGHTS

There are many agencies in the community working together to help ensure the safety of students. Your role as a school volunteer is vital. Thank you for the positive impact you have on students every day.