

# **Abuse & Molestation: Procedures & Guidelines**

Illini Bluffs Community Unit School District #327 has a zero-tolerance position regarding abuse or molestation. All staff members and volunteers are required to read these Guidelines and sign an acknowledgment form.

## **A. Types of abuse - Definitions**

1. Physical abuse is an injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a student.
2. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a student and an adult or between two students. This includes any activity meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other student.
3. Emotional abuse is a mental or emotional injury to a student that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's growth, development, or psychological functioning.
4. Neglect is the failure to provide for a student's basic needs or the failure to protect a student from harm.

## **B. Expectations**

Policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in an organization. Because offenders often violate policies to gain access to students, when staff members know and understand policies, they can identify, interrupt, and report policy violations. Simply interrupting a policy violation can prevent a false allegation of abuse or put an offender on notice that no one works in private, the rules apply to everyone, and violations will be detected.

### **1. Physical Contact**

District 327's physical contact guidelines promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting students, volunteers and staff members. District 327 encourages appropriate physical contact with students and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by staff members or volunteers toward students in District 327's programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Examples of appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions include, but are not limited to:

<b><i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i></b>	<b><i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Side hugs</li><li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs</li><li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li><li>• Handshakes</li><li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li><li>• Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li><li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li><li>• Arms around shoulders</li><li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full-frontal hugs</li><li>• Kisses</li><li>• Showing affection in an isolated area</li><li>• Lap sitting</li><li>• Wrestling</li><li>• Piggyback rides</li><li>• Tickling</li><li>• Allowing a student to cling to a staff member's or volunteer's leg</li><li>• Any type of massage given by or to a student, unless the massage is part of documented medical treatment</li><li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the student, staff member ,or volunteer</li><li>• Touching the bottom, chest, or genital areas</li></ul>

## 2. Verbal Interaction

District 327 staff members and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to students in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Staff members and volunteers must not initiate sexually-oriented conversations with students. Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with students.

Examples of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions include, but are not limited to:

<i><b>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</b></i>	<i><b>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive reinforcement</li><li>• Appropriate jokes</li><li>• Encouragement</li><li>• Praise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name-calling</li><li>• Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving students in the personal problems or issues of staff members and volunteers</li><li>• Secrets</li><li>• Cursing</li><li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li><li>• Shaming</li><li>• Belittling</li><li>• Derogatory remarks</li><li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate students</li><li>• Derogatory remarks about the student or his/her family</li><li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li></ul>

## 3. One-on-One Interaction

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a student. District 327 aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the administration.

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

<i><b>Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When a staff member has a one-on-one meeting with a student, always do so in a public place where the staff member and student are both in full view of others.</li><li>• Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, handshakes, or other similar physical interactions.</li><li>• If meeting a student in a room or office, staff members should leave the door open or move the meeting to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.</li><li>• When having a one-on-one meeting with a student, staff members are encouraged to inform other staff members and volunteers that you are/will be alone with a student and ask them to randomly drop in.</li><li>• Document and immediately report to administration any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.</li></ul>

#### **4. Private Tutoring/Private Coaching**

One-on-one situations, such as private tutoring and private coaching sessions, introduce additional risks for false allegations of abuse. District 327 highly discourages private tutoring and private coaching. Staff members and volunteers should observe the following:

1. For matters occurring on school property, staff members and volunteers must have supervisor approval for any private tutoring or private coaching sessions, which occur outside of the normal practice environment.
2. Tutoring and coaching sessions that occur outside of school facilities with District 327 students are highly discouraged

### **C. Monitoring and Supervision**

When staff members are adequately supervised, potential offenders are less likely to act on their impulses because they face detection. When students are adequately supervised, they too, are less likely to engage in inappropriate interactions with others. Similarly, the physical facilities must be monitored, particularly out-of-the-way locations or locations that might permit an offender undue access to or privacy with a student. Effective supervision and monitoring require that a variety of methods be used frequently, at both scheduled and random times.

#### **1. Facility Monitoring**

Building architecture can increase or mitigate the risk of an incident or accident. Because most incidents of sexual behavior occur in private, the extent to which privacy is managed, risk is managed.

#### **2. Monitoring High-Risk Activities**

##### **i. Bathroom Activities**

Most incidents of student-to-student abuse occur in the bathrooms. Therefore, the following supervision guidelines are recommended:

When supervising restroom use, adult staff members should first quickly scan the bathroom before allowing students to enter.

1. For “Group Bathroom Breaks”:
  - a. Require staff members to take groups of two or more students to the bathroom – following the “rule of three” or more.
  - b. If the bathroom only has one stall, only one student should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with staff members.
  - c. If there are multiple stalls, only send in as many students as there are stalls.
  - d. Minimize students of different ages using the bathroom at the same time.
  - e. Require staff members to stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot.
2. For single use restrooms:
  - a. Require all staff members to frequently check bathrooms.
3. Discourage staff members from using the bathroom at the same time as students.
4. If assisting young students in the stalls, staff members should keep the door to the stall open.

##### **ii. Locker Room Activities**

The locker room procedures include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Requiring staff members to stand within earshot of the locker room when in use by students.
2. Requiring staff members to routinely check inside the locker room so users know the locker room is monitored.
3. Discouraging the use of locker rooms by students of different ages at the same time.

4. Prohibiting the use of locker room horseplay such as towel snapping.
5. When possible, arrange lockers to minimize unnecessary privacy.

### **iii. Shower Activities**

Staff members and students must shower at different times. Create shower schedules that will permit supervision of the students while staff members shower. While the students shower, at least one staff member should stand in the bathroom doorway and be within earshot of the students.

### **iv. Overnight Activities**

Overnight stays present unique risks to students, staff members, and volunteers. They often involve changing clothes, groups of both genders and different ages in a more intimate atmosphere than usual, more unstructured activities, and increased supervision demands for staff members. All overnight activities must follow applicable board policies.

#### **Supervision Guidelines:**

1. All overnight activities must be documented and approved in writing by the Superintendent or their designee.
2. Administrators, when present, are expected to regularly and randomly observe overnight activities on a scheduled and periodic basis.
3. The Superintendent or their designee should appoint a “lead” staff member to supervise the overnight. A meeting with all staff members should be conducted to discuss the unique risks of overnight trips, unique elements of the specific overnight trip, and to review the specific policies and procedures/guidelines.
4. Provide parents/guardians with written information about the overnight activity. All parents/guardians must sign a permission slip for their students to attend the overnight.
5. Determine the appropriate staff-to-student ratios before the event and schedule staff members accordingly.
6. Meetings with the group should be hosted in open and observable areas; meetings should not be hosted in staff member or student rooms.

#### **v. Overnights at the Facility:**

- a. Physical boundaries within the District 327’s facilities must be clearly defined and explained to the students.
- b. Assign each staff member to a specific group of students to supervise. Each staff member should then maintain a role sheet that lists all of the students in his or her group. Head counts and roll call checks should be conducted routinely throughout the evening.
- c. Assign staff members to high-risk areas in District 327’s facilities, such as the bathrooms, entrances and exits, hallways, etc. If it is not possible to assign specific staff members to these areas, assign specific staff members to conduct periodic facility “walk-throughs.”
- d. With regard to sleeping arrangements, separate the male and female students into separate rooms and post staff members at the entrances and exits to these rooms. If this is not feasible, separate males and females by as much space as possible.
- e. When performing room checks, staff members should always go in pairs.
- f. At least one staff member must stay awake overnight.

#### **vi. Overnights Away from the Facility:**

- a. Overnight stays at private homes are prohibited.
- b. Physical boundaries at the off-site location must be clearly defined and explained to the students.
- c. Assign each staff member to a specific group of students to supervise. Each staff member should then maintain a sheet that lists all of the students in his or her group. Head counts and roll call checks should be conducted routinely throughout the event.

- d. If in a cabin type setting, staff members should be placed in bunks to maximize supervision around the cabin and in a way that decreases the chances of students sneaking out (such as by the door).
- e. In hotel rooms, assign students to rooms based on sex and age. Staff members should have their own rooms. If staff members must share rooms with students, they must have their own beds and never change in front of students.
- f. All staff members are to be on duty in the halls or cabins at night until an hour after lights out and all rooms are quiet.

## D. Electronic Communication

Any private electronic communication between staff members, students, and volunteers, including the use of gaming platforms or social networking websites like - Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, instant messaging, texting, etc. - is prohibited. All communication between staff members, volunteers, and students must be transparent.

Examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication include, but are not limited to:

<i>Appropriate Electronic Communication</i>	<i>Inappropriate Electronic Communication</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sending and replying to emails utilizing the school district's email system</li> <li>• Utilizing the Remind application or similar messaging application</li> <li>• Posting pictures of students on school-sponsored social media accounts</li> <li>• Sharing posts from school social media accounts to personal social media accounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments</li> <li>• Sexually oriented conversations</li> <li>• Private messages between staff members and volunteers with students</li> <li>• Posting inappropriate pictures of students on personal social media sites</li> <li>• Posting inappropriate comments on pictures</li> <li>• "Friending" students on social networking sites or gaming platforms</li> <li>• Texting students from personal electronic communication devices</li> </ul>

Use of personal electronic communication devices to contact (via voice, text, or pictures/video) students for personal and/or inappropriate reasons shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

## E. Existing Board Policies

The Illini Bluffs Board of Education (the "Board") currently has adopted a number of policies, including but not limited to policies 4:165 – Awareness and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Grooming Behaviors and 5:90 – Abused and Neglected Child Reporting, the subject matter of which relates in whole or in part to these Guidelines. To the extent not inconsistent with these Guidelines, any such Board policies that relate to abuse and/or molestation are hereby incorporated by this reference. However, any Board policies shall supersede the provisions of these Guidelines to the extent these provisions are inconsistent with the provisions of the Board's policies.