

5519 DATING VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL (M)

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The Board of Education recognizes that the development of a student, both academically and personally, reflects not only the educational programs and goals of the district, but also the atmosphere in which the student attends school. A student who experiences dating violence suffers academically and the student's safety at school is jeopardized. This policy promotes a specific, focused and integrated system of supports to build a school climate that encourages healthy relationships and addresses all forms of dating violence (verbal, emotional, sexual, physical, and electronic). Definitions of all terms used in this policy are listed in Regulation 5519. This policy applies regardless of the sexual orientation or gender identity or expression of the victim or aggressor.

District policies and school practices that recognize the full continuum of prevention, early intervention, corrective guidance and a protocol for active intervention when violence or harassment occurs are critical to maintaining a school environment that is free of violence, including teen dating violence in all its forms. This includes compliance with the NJDOE mandate (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.23a) that requires instruction regarding dating violence for all students in grades 7-12. Acts or incidents of dating violence at school, whether they are verbal, sexual, physical, or emotional, will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with the District's Student Discipline/Code of Conduct policy 5600 and Policy 5751 Title IX Sexual Harassment and Non-Discrimination.

All school staff members (administrative staff, instructional staff, support staff, coaches, and other trained volunteers) shall take all reasonable measures to prevent acts or incidents of dating violence at school involving a student. The District-wide primary contact for this policy is the District's Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will be responsible for integrating this policy into existing policy and programs throughout the District. Additionally, as defined by policy 5751, the Title IX Coordinator is responsible for the administrative response to reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence or sexual violence. The Title IX Coordinator is available to discuss the grievance process, coordinate supportive measures, explain the District's policies and procedures, and provide education on relevant issues. The Title IX Coordinator may designate one or more Deputy Title IX Coordinators to facilitate these responsibilities.

The principal of each school shall designate at least one school employee to serve as the School-based Advocate ("Advocate"). The School Based Advocate shall provide a specialized response to sexual harassment, dating violence and sexual violence in the



District and act as a liaison between the school, Title IX Coordinator and students who are experiencing sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence or sexual violence. The School Based Advocate may be a social worker, guidance counselor, school psychologist, school nurse or other staff member responsible for Title IX and/or other violence and drug prevention efforts. The School-based Advocate will work with colleagues when a student experiences sexual harassment and/or exhibits early warning signs of dating violence and shall provide a specialized response to abusive behavior in the District. The Title IX Coordinator will work together with the School Based Advocate at each school to implement these goals.

The responsibilities of a School Based Advocate include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Inform the student of this policy and their rights under the policy, including accommodations and grievance process;
- Provide the student with a list of local resources, including in and out of District services, and refer them to appropriate services;
- If desired by the student, create a safety plan that addresses in and out of District safety;
- Offer to connect the student with a campus or community-based advocate;
- Assist with enforcement of protection orders; and

Offer ongoing assistance and advocacy to the student throughout the student's school career. If a school employee takes any action with regard to an incident of dating violence or sexual violence, the school employee shall document the action in writing and provide the documentation to the appropriate School Based Advocate. After a school employee refers a non-offending student to the School Based Advocate, the school employee shall take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the student's safety pending action by the Advocate.

School staff members are obligated to report all acts or incidents of dating violence to the Principal, Title IX Coordinator or School Based Advocate in accordance with the provisions outlined in Regulation 5519. A verbal report shall be made to the Principal or designees as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the student's school day when the staff member witnesses or learns of an act or incident of dating violence at school. A written report regarding the act or incident shall be submitted to the Principal or designees by the reporting staff member no later than one day after the act or incident occurred. The School Based Advocate or Principal shall send all incident reports to the Title IX Coordinator within 24 hours of receiving the report.

School staff members are required to report all acts or incidents of dating violence at school they witness or upon receiving reliable information concerning acts or incidents of



dating violence at school. Acts or incidents may include, but are not limited to: those characterized by physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse; digital or electronic acts or incidents of dating violence; and/or patterns of behavior which are threatening or controlling. Students may also report acts or incidents of dating violence.

The Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, shall adopt the guidelines and procedures outlined in Regulation 5519 for responding to acts or incidents of dating violence at school. The protocols outlined in Regulation 5519 have been established for any school staff member who witnesses or learns of an act or incident of dating violence at school and for school administrators to work with the victim and the aggressor of an act or incident of dating violence.

Dating violence statements and investigations shall be kept in files separate from student academic and discipline records to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of confidential information. Every act or incident of dating violence at school that is reported shall be documented in an appropriate manner. This should include statements, planning actions, and disciplinary measures as well as counseling and other support resources that are offered and prescribed to the victim or aggressor. Access to student files, including by parents/guardians, is governed by federal and state laws; nothing in this policy will be construed to alter existing school policies on access to student files.

School administrators shall implement discipline and remedial procedures to address acts or incidents of dating violence at school consistent with the school's student code of conduct, policy 5600. The policies and procedures specific to acts or incidents of dating violence at school shall be used to address the act or incident as well as serve as remediation, intervention, education, and prevention for all individuals involved. The responses shall be tiered with consideration given to the seriousness and the number of previous occurrences of acts or incidents in which the alleged aggressor have been involved.

Consequences may include, but are not limited to: admonishment, temporary removal from the classroom, classroom or administrative detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, reports to law enforcement, and/or expulsion. Retaliation towards the victim of any act or incident of dating violence shall be considered when administering consequences to the alleged aggressor based on the severity of the act or incident.

Remediation/intervention may include, but is not limited to: parent conferences, student counseling (all students involved in the act or incident), peer support groups, corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experiences, supportive student interventions (Intervention and Referral Services - I&RS), behavioral management plans, and/or alternative placements.



Any student who has been a victim of dating violence or sexual violence may request accommodations from the school in order to preserve their access to a meaningful education and safety in school. Accommodations impact the school enrollment, participation, or environment of only the student experiencing dating violence or sexual violence. Examples of accommodations include:

- Change of class seat assignment;
- Change of locker assignment;
- Change of student's class schedule;
- Permission to leave class to see a counselor or social worker;
- Private space for meeting with counselors and school employees regarding dating violence and sexual violence issues;
- Excused absence for classes missed due to dating or sexual violence; and
- Makeup class work, including homework, quizzes, tests, and any other graded work, for classes missed due to dating violence or sexual violence or threat thereof.

Requests for accommodations may be made orally or in writing to any school employee or directly to the appropriate School Based Advocate. School employees shall refer all requests for accommodation to the School Based Advocate. If the request is made orally, the School Based Advocate shall document the request in writing. The School Based Advocate shall confer with the principal and provide a written decision on the accommodation to the student as soon as possible, but in all cases a decision must be made within five business days of the request. A denial to a request for accommodation must include the reasons for the denial.

A student has the right to present grievances to school authorities following the formal grievance process as identified in District Policy 5751 – Title IX Sexual Harassment & Non-Discrimination.

A pattern of behaviors may be an important sign a student is involved in an unhealthy or abusive dating relationship. The warning signs listed in Regulation 5519 shall educate the school community on the characteristics that a student in an unhealthy or abusive relationship may exhibit. Many of these warning signs make a connection to one student in the relationship asserting control and power over the other. Recognizing one or more signs of teen dating violence plays an important role in preventing, educating, and intervening in acts or incidents of dating violence. The Board of Education shall make



available to students and their family's information on safe, appropriate school, family, peer, and community resources available to address dating violence.

All staff shall participate in ongoing professional development to promote healthy teen relationships and prevent teen dating violence. Training will address, at a minimum:

- Strategies to foster healthy relationships among youth;
- Understanding potential lifelong health effects of teen dating violence (such as increased risk of suicide, substance abuse, unsafe sexual behavior, unintended pregnancy, and eating disorders);
- The health and behavioral indicators of teen dating violence and its relationship to bullying;
- District's policy for promoting healthy teen relationships, preventing abuse and responding to students who engage in abusive behavior;
- Early intervention strategies;
- Safe and age-appropriate interventions for targeted students and accused students;
- and

Using the positive school climate strategies to emphasize the importance of adults serving as positive role models and effective upstanders.

The Board of Education shall incorporate age-appropriate dating violence education in grades seven through twelve through the health education curriculum in alignment with Policy 2242 Health and Physical Education. The educational program shall include, but is not limited to:

- Characteristics and skills of healthy relationships and how to promote them;
- Definition of abusive and unhealthy adolescent relationships, including electronic abuse;
- Early warning signs of unhealthy relationships;
- Link between bullying and teen dating violence;
- Responsible usage of technology to promote healthy relationship awareness; and
- School-wide, integrated and multi-faceted primary prevention activities aimed at changing school culture that includes youth-led awareness activities encouraging positive bystander behavior, as well as implementing early intervention with students by school staff.

Upon written request to the school Principal, a parent/legal guardian of a student less than eighteen years of age shall be permitted, within a reasonable period of time after the request is made, to examine the dating violence education instruction materials developed by the school district.

The District shall establish and implement tools to monitor and assess teen dating violence prevention activities, incidents and responses, including:



- Evaluations, using data-based outcomes at least every three years to determine the effectiveness of the services;
- An annual report to the community about District safety; and

Where appropriate, surveys (such as integrating teen dating violence questions in a school climate survey or locally-adapted national surveys), tracking systems or other mechanisms that provide useful information for the school community.

The District shall provide annual written notice to parents/guardians and students of this policy in multiple languages and prominently display it in school common areas with contact information for the School-based Advocate, counselors, hotline numbers, and service organizations, including domestic violence service providers or social and emotional learning (SEL) experts. The District shall include a copy of the policy in District and school handbooks. The District shall also inform parents/guardians about how to report an incident or help their child file a complaint of dating violence if necessary.

N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.23a.; 18A:37-33; 18A:37-34;
18A:37-35; 18A:37-37

New Jersey Department of Education Model Policy and Guidance for Incidents Involving Dating Violence – September 2011

Cross reference: Student Code of Conduct, Policy 2242 Health and Physical Education, Policy 5512 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying, Policy 5751 - Title IX Sexual Harassment & Non-Discrimination,

Adopted: 18 January 2012

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