

Break

the Cycle

**Empowering Youth to End
Domestic Violence**

**Making a
Difference
Across the
Nation**



...engaging, educating and
empowering youth

to build lives and communities free from
domestic and dating violence.

THE
safe  space
.ORG



Introduction



Presentation Objectives

- Understand the role of schools in preventing and responding to teen dating violence.
- Identify the key elements of an effective dating violence policy.
- Develop a plan to implement and evaluate policies in your communities.

Why Schools?


- Prevalence of dating violence among teens and on school campuses
- Link between dating violence and vital school safety issues
- Unique role of schools in youth development



*What should a school
policy look like?*

Key Elements

- Prevention
- Intervention
- Accommodations
- Discipline
- Teacher and staff trainings
- Administrative protocol



Schools are encouraged to utilize Break the Cycle and other community resources, to support effective implementation of this policy.

Student Education

Schools shall include information about dating violence and sexual violence in their curricula. Whenever possible, schools shall present this information in conjunction with information about related health and life skills topics. Schools are encouraged to utilize Break the Cycle and other community resources to accomplish this goal, particularly those that have already undergone DCPS' screening process.

<<< COMMENTARY >>>

The purpose of this Policy is to encourage schools' prevention and intervention efforts. The drafters believe that educating students on dating violence, sexual violence, and healthy relationships is a vital part of effective prevention work. Every classroom provides an opportunity for teachers to incorporate dating violence and sexual violence into their curricula. The Policy requires schools to provide prevention education to students. While schools should encourage teachers to incorporate real world issues, such as dating violence and sexual violence, into every class, the drafters recognize that the primary setting for this is likely to be a health or life skills class. The drafters encourage schools to use the Safe Schools modular curriculum, developed in conjunction with this Policy, in their health or life skills classes. The modular curriculum bundles the curricula of a variety of community organizations, covering a range of topics on health, relationships, and safety, including dating violence and sexual violence. The modular curriculum simplifies the process for schools of coordinating schedules with community organizations and provides a greater breadth of topics than if each teacher is responsible for contacting each organization individually.

Model respectful behavior at school and build healthy relationships education into all areas of the curriculum

All school employees have a duty to respond quickly and effectively when a student is experiencing dating violence



If you know what to look for you might be able to identify an abusive relationship before it becomes dangerous.

HELPING YOUR STUDENTS

How do I know if one of my students is experiencing violence in a relationship?

The warning signs of dating violence will not always be dramatic, but if you know what to look for you might be able to identify an abusive relationship before it becomes dangerous. You can also help your students identify warning signs of dating violence in their own relationships.

Look for these red flags:

- Problems with school attendance, particularly if this is a new problem
- Lack of interest in former extracurricular activities
- Sudden request for a change in schedule
- Unexplained changes in behavior, grades, or quality of schoolwork
- Noticeable change in weight, demeanor, or physical appearance
- Isolation from former friends
- Little social contact with anyone but the dating partner
- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Making excuses or apologizing for the dating partner's inappropriate behavior
- New disciplinary problems at school, such as bullying other students or acting out
- Name-calling or belittling from a dating partner

For School Resource Officers, in addition to the red flags above, other red flags include:

- Showing intense fear or being guarded or anxious at your questions and won't make eye-contact with you
- Constant or severe bruises and/or other injuries
- Arguments with other students or school employees that are uncharacteristic of the teen
- Damaged or torn clothing
- Teen is quick to deny suggestions of abuse or becomes protective of dating partner on the suggestion of abuse



This policy gives a student who is a victim the ability to request that the school initiate disciplinary procedures against an alleged perpetrator.

Accommodations

Any student who has been a victim of dating violence or sexual violence may request accommodations from the school in order to preserve his/her access to meaningful education and safety on campus. Accommodations impact the school enrollment, participation, or environment of only the student experiencing dating violence or sexual violence. Changes to an alleged perpetrator's school enrollment, participation, or environment must be made through the grievance procedure described below.

*** COMMENTARY ***

This section of the Policy describes the types of accommodations available to students experiencing dating violence or sexual violence and the procedures for requesting and obtaining accommodations. Accommodations are categorized in two Sec. As noted in the definitions section, accommodations are changes that affect only the student who is the victim of dating violence or sexual violence. Nothing in this Policy should be construed to limit a school's ability to discipline a student who is a perpetrator or to change a school's process for initiating such discipline. The definitions encourage schools to use the Policy in conjunction with their own disciplinary procedures as the Policy is intended to describe separately the needed framework and complement standard disciplinary procedures which focus primarily on the perpetrator.

The Policy gives a student who is a victim the ability to request that the school initiate disciplinary procedures against an alleged perpetrator of dating violence or sexual violence. The district's intent of this process is to be used to address incidents that occur off-campus but which have an impact on campus as well as incidents that occur on campus but which were not addressed by a school employee. Such requests for disciplinary action are not accommodations but grievances, which follow a different set of procedures, because they impact another student's rights, and are discussed in another section of the Policy.

Accommodations help preserve a student's right to a meaningful education and safety on campus

Disciplinary codes must take into account the unique dynamics of teen dating violence



DC Municipal Regulations grant students the right to present grievances to school authorities and receive prompt disposition from school officials.

Grievance Procedure

Section 2401.16 of the DC Municipal Regulations grants students the right to present grievances to school authorities and receive prompt disposition from school officials. Section 2406.4 describes the procedures for presenting a grievance; these procedures are explained below in the context of dating violence and sexual violence.

A student who is experiencing dating violence or sexual violence may file two types of grievances under this procedure:

1. Appeal of a denial of a request for accommodation
2. Request for disciplinary action against an alleged perpetrator, including changes to the alleged perpetrator's school enrollment, participation, or environment

A minor student may file a grievance on his/her own, without parent involvement. A parent may file a grievance on behalf of a minor student with the student's written consent.

WHAT DO YOU DO...

If you suspect one of your students is experiencing dating violence:

- Refer to your school's dating violence policy for school-specific procedures.
- Talk to the student privately about your concerns. Tell him/her what you have seen and that you are concerned about his/her health and safety.
- Offer to connect the student with resources on campus or in your community, including Break the Cycle.
- Offer to help the student create a safety plan (see Appendix).
- Suggest s/he take the Healthy Relationship Quiz (see Appendix).

If you suspect one of your students is abusing a dating partner:

- Refer to your school's dating violence policy for school-specific procedures.
- Talk to the student privately about your concerns. Tell your student what you have seen and that you are worried that s/he is not treating his/her dating partner with the respect s/he deserves.
- Tell him/her that dating violence is a crime and a violation of school policy.
- Offer to connect the student with resources on campus or in your community, including Break the Cycle.

If you witness an incident of dating violence:

- Refer to your school's dating violence and disciplinary policies for school-specific procedures.
- If the incident is in progress, intervene to help the victim or get help from another school employee.
- Address safety and health first. Ask if either party needs immediate medical attention.
- Tell the students that you saw the incident and what steps you will take next.
- Tell the victim of the abuse that you are concerned about his/her safety.
- Tell the perpetrator of the abuse that you are concerned about his/her behavior and that his/her actions are abusive.
- Offer to connect both students with resources on campus or in your community, including Break the Cycle.

For School Resource Officers: Officers should intervene, separate the teens, and make sure that the teens meet separately with the Principal or a school employee who is designated to handle teen dating violence or sexual violence.

All school personnel should be trained to recognize and respond appropriately to dating violence

Develop administrative protocols to provide an efficient and consistent response to dating violence on campus



Schools are in a unique position to implement prevention and intervention programs that reach teens.

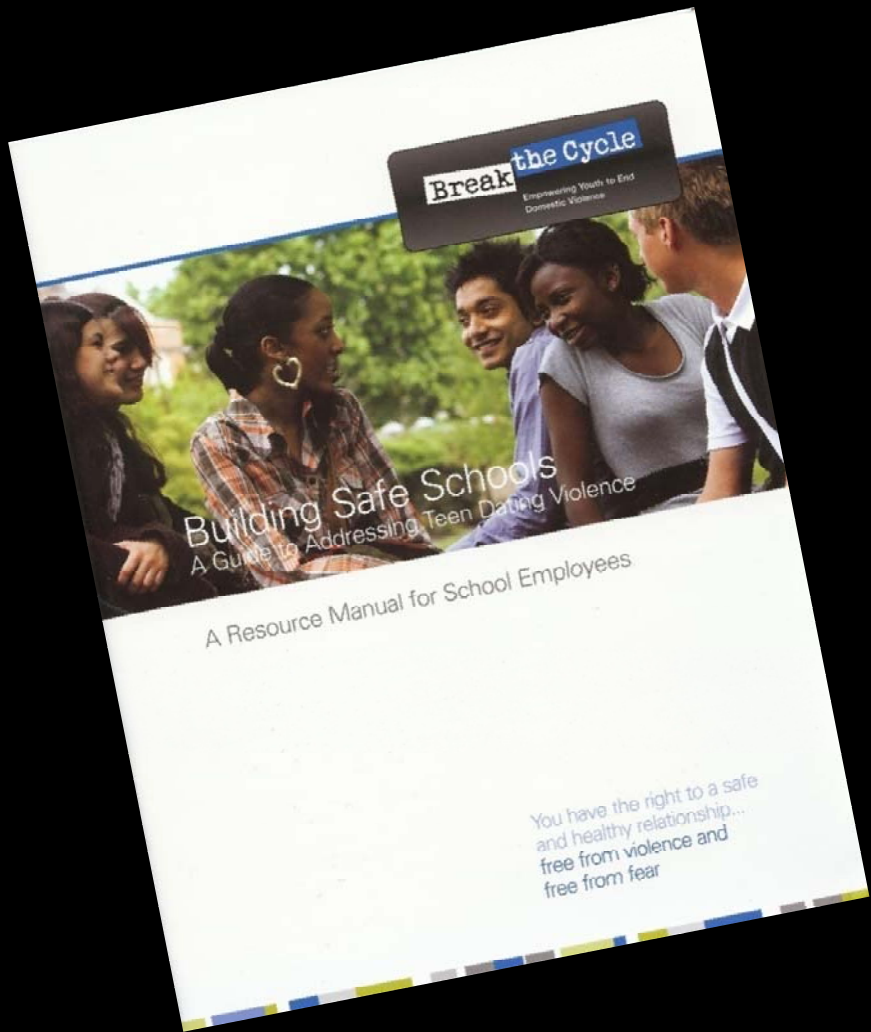
Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to interpret and apply the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations pertaining to the rights and responsibilities of students and school employees in the context of dating violence and sexual violence within the District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) system.

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The Model Policy was created to facilitate District of Columbia secondary schools' adoption of policies that specifically address dating violence and sexual violence among students. Schools are in a unique position to implement prevention and intervention programs that will reach teenagers where they spend the majority of their day. District of Columbia schools are in a position to become leaders on school response to dating violence and sexual violence. Although several states and school districts throughout the country have made tremendous efforts to systematically address dating violence and sexual violence, the vast majority of school districts have no policies that directly address these issues.

District of Columbia Public Schools are governed by the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR). This Policy codifies the regulations relevant to students' rights and responsibilities, applies them in the context of dating violence and sexual violence, and expands student rights where necessary to afford victims of dating violence and sexual violence the safety and protection they need.



Safe Schools Project

Safe Schools Project

GOAL 1

Model Policy

Work in collaboration with schools and experts to develop appropriate school policy to prevent teen sexual and dating violence, and to provide appropriate and effective intervention.

Safe Schools Project

GOAL 2

Technical Assistance and Training

Provide middle and high schools with technical assistance and training to implement policies and procedures that ensure public school staff are able to effectively serve young victims and hold young perpetrators accountable.

Safe Schools Project

GOAL 3

Preventive Education

Develop and implement school and community based education programs, providing teens with information to help avoid victimization and/or perpetration of violence, and provide resources to teen victims.

Safe Schools Project

Where are we now?

*What lessons have we
learned?*



Questions? Comments?

*Interested in developing a
policy for your community?*

Contact us at policy@breakthecycle.org

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www.breakthecycle.org

www.thesafespace.org