




STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Superintendents of Schools

**FROM:** Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education 

**DATE:** October 2, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Sexual Assault and Abuse Prevention and Awareness Guidance

The current climate and national news surrounding sexual assault and sexual violence may lead students to have questions or prompt them to speak about their own experiences. Therefore, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is reissuing sexual assault and abuse prevention and awareness guidance in an effort to provide resources to districts to support students and staff with discussions on sexual assault prevention, awareness and reporting.

In 2016, the CSDE, in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence developed the *Statewide K-12 Sexual Assault & Abuse Prevention & Awareness Program Guidelines*. The *Guidelines* can be accessed on the CSDE website <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Publications/Statewide-K12--Sexual-Assault-Abuse--Prevention-Awareness--Program-Guidelines> and include important information including definitions of terms associated with sexual assault as well as misconceptions regarding sexual violence; recommendations for delivering effective professional development; identifying developmentally appropriate awareness and prevention educational materials for students; suggestions for effective policy guidance; and a host of excellent resources that schools can access immediately to frame age-appropriate conversations between students and staff.

In addition, it is critical that school districts engage families and communities in conversations regarding sexual abuse and assault and partner with appropriate state and local organizations with specific expertise in addressing sexual abuse and assault in order to support the school community. Districts can find expert partners and helpful programs available in the community in Section 5 of the *Guidelines* under “State Resources” or by contacting the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence at 860-282-9881 or <http://endsexualviolencect.org/>

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