



The DREAM Program, Inc.

Mentor Boundaries, Transportation Guidelines, and Child Abuse & Reporting Procedures

I. Mentor Boundaries

In order to make DREAM as safe as possible for all of its participants, we need to respect a few boundaries – boundaries that serve to protect all those involved with DREAM and help us make responsible decisions.

- **General Conduct:** As representatives of DREAM, we must hold ourselves to the highest standards at all DREAM functions and at any time we might be viewed as members of the DREAM organization (both with and without children). Showing gratitude for the generosity of others and acting at all times as if representing the entire organization is important to maintain respect for ourselves, our work, our programs, and DREAM as a whole.
- **One-on-One Time:** During one-on-one time, activities must be held within hearing distance of other adults (dorm room doors should always be left open). In the case of hikes, short outings away from people, or activities that take place in non-public spaces, we must always use two-deep leadership. In regards to co-ed matches where the mentee is under 8yrs old, the mentor should discuss with the parents how to handle bathroom situations prior to being one-on-one.
- **Two-deep Leadership:** When programming in non-public spaces a minimum of two responsible adults need be present. Ideally two DREAM mentors will be present at such times. If this is not possible another responsible adult may accompany a DREAM mentor on such an outing. On co-ed overnight outings, at least one adult of each sex needs to be in attendance and two adults need to be present in the sleeping area. Individuals who have not completed DREAM's Screening Procedures should never be left alone with a child.
- **Physical Contact:** Physical contact will never be intended for harm of any sort, nor bear sexual connotations or intentions. Physical contact must always be comfortable for all participants involved and never involve restraints or un-welcomed physical attention.
- **Rules:** DREAM rules should be decided on as a group and agreed upon by both children and mentors. Discipline used in DREAM should be constructive and always should be based on communication with the child's family. Physical punishment is prohibited.
- **Hazing Prohibited:** Hazing may not be included as part of any DREAM activity. Mentors should adhere to individual college policies regarding hazing or activities that could be construed as such.
- **Privacy:** We need to respect the privacy of all of DREAM's participants. Privacy should be respected in situations such as changing into swimming suits or using the restrooms, as well as taken into consideration in terms of confidentiality, care, medical disclosure, and thoughtfulness in sharing information about our mentees and each other.
- **Use of Media:** DREAM's media release does not cover personal use of photos or names of DREAM children for public venues, this includes but is not limited to facebook, myspace, and personal websites. **You** are responsible for obtaining permission from the guardians, or the mentee if they are over 18, before using photos or names for your personal use in a public venue. Additionally the DREAM Office maintains a list of children and families who have not granted DREAM permission to use their likeness via photo or written content. This list will be provided to you each semester.
- **Proper Preparation:** Always plan to be inclusive of all DREAMers in your program. Activities with elements of higher than normal risk should never be undertaken without proper preparation. This includes: experience, equipment, clothing, supervision, parent consultation, awareness of child health history, and other appropriate safety measures. If you have any uncertainties regarding safety or risk, before undertaking an activity, please seek assistance from the DREAM Office. In case of injury or incident, be sure to communicate with parents, co-chairs, and the DREAM Office.
- **Appropriate Attire:** Proper clothing for children and mentors is important during all DREAM related activities.
- **Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol:** The use of tobacco products, drugs and alcohol is prohibited during any DREAM event. Care should be taken to keep inappropriate conversations and materials outside of DREAM activities. This includes conversations about weekend plans or parties involving substances and/or drug and alcohol paraphernalia. When children are not present, there can often be a fine line between mentors spending time together outside of the program and what could be construed as a DREAM event. Please be aware of the potential impact irresponsible alcohol consumption may have on your program and the DREAM organization overall.
- **Relationships:** Supportive relationships that protect the well-being of all DREAM's constituents are the core of DREAM's effectiveness. Relationships between mentors or staff and members of DREAM's housing communities that could potentially jeopardize or abuse this trust are discouraged.

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II. Transportation Guidelines

It is a big responsibility to transport children to and from DREAM events. For their safety, your safety, and the safety of the program, the following transportation guidelines must be followed whenever driving is part of a DREAM activity. Please adhere to these guidelines whether you are driving, your own vehicle or someone else's vehicle.

- **Front Seat Rule:** All children 13 and older may ride in the front seat. Any children under 13 years of age must ride in the back seat at all times.
- **Booster Seats:** All children 7 years of age and younger must ride in approved child safety restraints. DREAM mentors should use child's own booster seat.
- **Alcohol and Drugs:** Driving under the influence is prohibited. Alcohol (open or closed containers) and other drugs must also never be present in vehicles during DREAM events. All drivers must have 0 BAC and not be under the influence of other illicit drugs.
- **Seat Belts:** Seat belts must be worn by all occupants in vehicles transporting DREAM mentors and/or children. Each occupant needs to have their own seat belt — sharing seatbelts or lap sitting is not allowed. Make use of shoulder straps whenever available — if a shoulder strap is not available in the front seat, do not use that seat.
- **The Law:** Obey all driving rules and regulations. Always drive with your license and a current copy of your vehicle's insurance and registration. Always err on the side of caution especially in the case of yellow lights and always obey the speed limit.
- **Mother Nature's Law:** Do not drive in hazardous weather. New England winters are brutal. Before driving, make sure the conditions are safe for travel. It is ok to switch the program up and have DREAM onsite, if the mentors are comfortable driving there!
- **Keys, Cars, and Kids:** Keys should be with driver at all times for safety reasons. Children and car keys is often a formula for disaster. Children should also never be in a car without an adult present in the vehicle. When you are not in your car lock the doors.
- **Cell Phones and other Tech:** When driving for DREAM your attention should be on the road. Do not talk on the phone while driving, and refrain from using iPods, CD players, or other devices that detract from your ability to focus on safe driving. Please choose a radio station, CD, iPod track, etc. prior to putting the car in gear!
- **Music:** Kids absolutely love listening to music in the car. Please make sure music is appropriate in content and in the messages it conveys.
- **Accidents Happen:** If you are involved in an accident, first make sure everyone is safe from further danger. Call 911 immediately if anyone is hurt or in danger. If children are present, call the police at the time of the accident regardless of whether or not anyone is hurt. Stay calm and get a police report, even if there appears to be no damage. Contact the DREAM office about the incident immediately. DREAM staff will document the accident, and be able to provide further support and assistance to you.

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III. Child Abuse & Reporting Procedures

This Document has been reviewed by Prevent Child Abuse Vermont

Every DREAMer needs to take child abuse seriously, know how to work with children responsibly and respectfully, be able to recognize signs and symptoms at all times, and know what to do next. Here are some frequently asked questions:

1. What are the signs & symptoms of child abuse?

Each child reacts differently to abuse. In physical abuse, injuries to the child might be evident, but with any kind of abuse, children often give only behavioral clues. Be alert to changes in the child's behavior; any abrupt change in behavior that is maintained for a week or longer is a sign that the child is experiencing stress. That stress could stem from a variety of causes — including child abuse. Be aware that child abuse can be inflicted accidentally or intentionally by many varied situations, including people of any age and any relationship to the child (peers, family members, neighbors, strangers, etc.) Here are some specific signs for each kind of abuse...

Physical Abuse: A child who has been physically abused might have suspicious injuries. These injuries are different from those normally associated with childhood "wear and tear."

- **Burns:** Burns that might indicate the child has been abused include cigarette or cigar burns on the soles of the feet, the palms of the hands, or the back. Other burns associated with abuse are friction or tether burns on the wrists, ankles, or around the neck caused by ropes used to tie the child. Wet burns on the hands and feet that appear to be glove like or sock like are caused by forcing the child to bathe in water that is too hot. Dry burns leave distinctive marks in the shape of the instrument used to inflict them. Commonly, in child abuse cases, these include electric irons, radiator grates, and stove burners.
- **Bruises:** Bruises of different colors, indicating infliction at different times and in different stages of healing, often indicate abuse. This is particularly true if the bruises are on the abdomen, back, or face. Bruises, like burns, also might have distinctive shapes indicating the weapon used to inflict them.
- **Lacerations and abrasions:** Children often have scraped knees, shins, palms, or elbows — predictable injuries. When children have lacerations and abrasions in soft tissue areas, such as on the abdomen, back, or backs of arms and legs, it is a strong indicator of physical abuse. Human bite marks, especially when they are recurrent and appear to be adult-sized, are also strongly indicative of abuse.
- **Fractures:** Unexplained fractures are cause for concern. A child with multiple fractures is almost certain to be a victim of abuse. Other signs include swollen or tender limbs and spiral fractures caused by jerking of the arms.
- **Stress and Behavioral Changes:** Children who have been physically abused also are likely to show signs of stress. Childhood stress can result from any upsetting situation such as family disruption, moving, or even the death of a pet. It can also be a result of child abuse. If a child abruptly changes his/her behavior for more than a few days in a manner that you feel is inappropriate, you might want to ask the child if something is wrong or if you can help.

Emotional Abuse: The indicators of emotional abuse may be harder to detect. Some visible signs are lagging physical development, habit disorders such as thumb sucking, difficulty concentrating, extreme attachment to their mentor, harassing and bullying behavior to other children, and low self esteem and confidence.

Neglect: As with emotional abuse, the signs of neglect are usually very subtle and hard to detect. A neglected child might show up at DREAM inappropriately dressed, lacking in personal hygiene, and/or consistently hungry. The child may be unfamiliar with "normal" practices like eating with utensils, accepting limits, and being unfamiliar with positive attention.

Sexual Abuse: Physical evidence of sexual abuse, if present at all, tends to be temporary. These signs include difficulty in walking, torn, stained, or bloody underwear, pain or itching in the genital area, and rashes or pain in the mouth and throat. The behavioral signs of sexual abuse are likely to be more conspicuous and present longer. Specific behaviors related to child sexual abuse are an age-inappropriate understanding of sex; reluctance to be left alone with a particular person; persistent and inappropriate sex play with peers or toys; wearing lots of clothing, especially to bed; drawings of genitalia; fear of touch; nightmares; attempts to engage you or other older individuals in sexual activity; and habitually posing his/her genitalia to others. The presence of any of these behaviors indicates a possibility that sexual abuse has occurred, but are not, in and of themselves, conclusive evidence that the child has been abused.

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2. **What should I do if I notice any of these signs?**

If you notice any signs of abuse or anything of concern, you should contact the DREAM Office immediately and state your suspicions to others who are responsible for determining if abuse is occurring (see numbers below, under #6).

3. **Why do most child victims of sexual abuse keep the abuse secret?**

A victim of child sexual abuse is under a great deal of pressure to keep the abuse secret. In many cases of child molestation, the molester has threatened to harm the child or a member of the child's family. The molester might have told the child that s/he would not be believed even if the child did tell. Another common situation is that the molester will tell the child that if the child tells about the abuse, s/he will get into trouble. The clear message is given to the child that if another person finds out, something bad will happen to the child.

4. **What should I do if a child tells me that s/he has been sexually abused?**

How an adult responds to a child when s/he tries to disclose abuse can influence the outcome of the child's victimization. By maintaining an apparent calm, the mentor can help reassure the child. By not criticizing the child, we counteract any statements the molester made to the victim about the child getting into trouble. Reassure the child that you are concerned about what happened to them and that you will get them some help.

5. **What if I am not sure that the child is being abused?**

Once you suspect that a child is being abused, you must contact the DREAM Central Office. DREAM staff will assist you in reporting your concern to Vermont's Department of Children and Families. Once a report has been made, the agency will investigate and determine if abuse can be substantiated. When a child is being abused, unless you make a report, the child might remain in grave danger. If you suspect that a DREAM child has been or will be abused, please contact the DREAM Office immediately. For additional information, check out <http://www.preventchildabuse.org>.

6. **How do I report suspected child abuse?**

DREAM office staff will provide you with immediate support concerning reporting procedures. Please contact us at 802 655 9015. We will assist you in making contact with the following appropriate agencies:

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont: 1 800 CHILDREN (for general information)
Department of Children and Families: 1-800-649-5285

In order to responsibly report concern for a child we will need to provide the following information:

- The child's name, address, date of birth or age, gender, telephone number, and other children in the household;
- Parents or guardians' name addresses, phone numbers, and household language spoken;
- Your name, address and telephone number;
- The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect;
- Any observations, knowledge or suspicions of previous abuse and neglect of the child or the child's siblings; and
- Any other information that you believe might be helpful in:
 - Establishing the cause of the injuries;
 - Establishing the reasons for the neglect;
 - Protecting the child; and
 - Assisting the family.

In order to protect the child, please respect confidentiality and only share your suspicions with DREAM Office Staff and the above agencies. Under the State of Vermont's Good Faith policy, no adverse action may be taken against you for reporting suspected child abuse.