I. Mentor Boundaries

DREAM operates with a core value of inclusion and strives to honor and celebrate all participants regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, socio-economic status, place of residence, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin. Every DREAMer should feel that they are a reflection of, and welcome contributor to, their DREAM network. 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 youth). 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 8years 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. <u>On co-ed overnight outings, at least two adults of each sex need to be in attendance and present in the sleeping area</u>. Individuals who have not completed DREAM's Screening Procedures should never be left alone with youth.
- **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 youth and mentors. Discipline used in DREAM should be constructive and should always be based on communication with the mentee'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 youth for public venues; this includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, and personal websites. **You** are responsible for obtaining permission from the guardians, or the mentee if s/he is over 18, before using photos or names for your personal use in a public venue. Additionally the DREAM Office maintains a list of youth 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 youth 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.

II. Transportation Guidelines

It is a big responsibility to transport youth 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 youth 13 and older may ride in the front seat. Any youth under 13 years of age must ride in the back seat at all times.
- **Booster Seats:** All youth 7 years of age and younger must ride in approved child safety restraints. DREAM mentors should use the mentee'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 youth. Each occupant needs to have his/her 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 the driver at all times for safety reasons. Youth with car keys are often a formula for disaster. Youth 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:** Youth 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 youth 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.
- **Crossing the Street:** City streets are busy. When crossing the street with DREAM youth always cross in the crosswalk, and wait for the walk signal.

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 respectably, 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 encountering 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 they are not, in and of themselves, conclusive evidence that the child has been abused.

Risk of Harm: If there is a significant danger that a child will suffer purposeful abuse in any of the above definitions a report should be made immediately. Risk of harm reports make up one third of substantiated child abuse reports in Vermont. Particular care should be taken for the following:

- **Risk of Physical Harm:** The presence of constant violent threats against a child's wellbeing by any individual, particularly when there is a history of prior abuse is grounds for a report. Other risks include but are not limited to: the presence of dangerous materials in the home, purposefully unsafe living conditions and forcing children to do dangerous work.
- **Risk of Neglect and Emotional Abuse:** Although the presence of drugs within a house is not child abuse in and of itself, risk of harm is present if caretakers are too inhibited due to drugs or alcohol to provide adequate care and protection of their children.
- **Risk of Sexual Abuse:** If the history of an individual close to a child or the nature of the individual's past abuse contains a high risk to the child or if the child's current caregiver is unable or unwilling to protect the child from harm a report should be made.

If an individual close to a child has a history that contains a high risk to the child, or if the child's current caregiver is unable or unwilling to protect the child from harm a report should be made.

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 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 Office. DREAM staff will assist you in reporting your concern to Boston'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 staff will provide you with immediate support concerning reporting procedures. Please contact us at (617) 699-8408. We will assist you in making contact with the following appropriate agencies:

Prevent Child Abuse: 1 800 CHILDREN (for general information)
Massachusetts' Department of Children and Families:
Weekdays 8:45AM-5:00PM:
Boston: 617-989-2800
Cambridge/Somerville: 617-520-8700
All other times call the Child-At-Risk Hotline: 1-800-792-5200

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' names, 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 staff and the above agencies.

IV. Grievance Procedure

A grievance is defined as any complaint from an individual employee or mentor or groups of employees or mentors alleging a violation of the terms of a DREAM policy or workplace agreement. It includes issues such as discrimination, unwarranted termination, unwarranted disciplinary actions, and violations of an employee or mentor's confidentiality. DREAM has a Grievance Procedure in place to protect mentors and staff. This procedure is intended to provide a mechanism through which grievances can be fully investigated and decisions rendered. The Grievance Procedure can be found in full on our website at http://dreamprogram.org/mentoring.

If a child or family that you work with has a grievance, DREAM has a separate procedure for them to follow. A copy of this Grievance Procedure for Children and Families may be found on the website at http://dreamprogram.org/youth-families.

Principles of Being a Mentor

Being a DREAM mentor is all about building a relationship with your mentee and creating a safe space. Here are some principles to keep in mind as a mentor:

Be consistent:
Your mentee may not have much consistency at home as her life might be driven by her families' immediate needs. You can do a lot just by showing up every week. You will build a stronger relationship by meeting with her regularly.

Listen:
Allow your mentee to speak his mind. Show him that you value his thoughts. Let him drive your conversations. Be a friend. Resist the urge to respond with your own values and avoid judgment.

Meet your mentee where he or she is at:
Ask your mentee what she is interested in and allow her to suggest and choose the activities you do. Set realistic expectations for your relationship that both you and your mentee can meet.

Be patient:
Building a relationship takes time. Celebrate the small victories. Your mentee may test the boundaries of your relationship. Don't take it personally. Recognize that this behavior is part of developing trust.

Be responsible:
Take responsibility for your relationship with your mentee. Communicate with your mentee and his family often. Reach out to fellow mentors and staff for support as necessary. Follow DREAM's Mentor Boundaries, Transportation Guidelines, and Child Abuse & Reporting Procedures.

Create a safe space:
Be trustworthy. Respect your mentee's privacy as well as her need to talk and share. Support your mentee as she takes on new challenges. Build and maintain a relationship of trust.

Be a positive force:
Be liberal with praise and encouragement. Show your mentee that he can grow and that you will be there to support him. Use positive language. Model good behavior.

Have fun:
Ultimately, DREAM is about having fun! Embrace your own inner child and allow your mentee to do so as well. Be silly, wear a costume, or try a wacky new game. Remember that everyone, youth and adults alike, needs to have fun!

Adapted from:
The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence and The National Mentoring Center at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, "Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors." September 2007.
Emma Lennon. "Principles of Mentoring." 2011.