

# Best Practice for Implementing & Sustaining Comprehensive Sexual Violence Prevention in Schools

Developed by the Vermont Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force

The following flow chart is designed to highlight what is considered “best practice” in implementing sexual violence prevention activities in your school. The flow of actions from 1 to 4 in the chart outlines the best path if you are starting from scratch. Many schools have already provided some training to teachers or directly to students. **Don’t stop what you are doing!** Keep offering those activities while you work to address the other steps that may fall earlier in the flow chart.

## ***Why are things in this order?***

Many schools want to dive right in and get a speaker from the community to present to the students. This is a great action and certainly builds energy for ongoing work. Taking a step back though we can see that it is also necessary to examine the response policies and protocols your school may have in place and ensure that all educators are trained with that information. **Prevention activities frequently trigger disclosures.**

Prevention practitioners have many experiences going in to a school for the first time to talk about healthy relationships or safe touching and then finding that they or the school has an increase in students and staff discloses of abusive events they experienced or witnessed. Talking about prevention can make a light bulb go off for people and they may feel like it is finally safe to talk about their experience or who have some confirmation that what happened to them was wrong. **When these disclosures happen, the first response is vital to victims feeling supported and safe.** Policies and training can help ensure that educators and administrators aren’t taken by surprise and know how to respond in an appropriate and trauma-informed manner.

As a third step in the implementation process, before talking with youth, we recommend providing information to parents and caregivers in the community. Kids do not live in the bubble of school, it is important that they are getting clear and consistent messaging across their lives. Parents and caregivers need resources to help them provide supportive information at home that builds on what you offer at school. This can be done in many ways, examples of which are outlined below.

## ***These aren’t items to check off your list.***

While these steps are presented in a sequential order, we do not intend to imply that you only do each activity once. Instead, policies need to be reviewed regularly (we suggest every 3 years), teachers need to be trained repeatedly, education for students needs to be infused into the curriculum, and community information needs to be constantly available. We hope the chart below helps show how the different pieces fit together to create a road map to safety.

## ***For more information on implementing Act 1 and comprehensive sexual violence prevention into your school, please contact:***

VT Agency of Education:  
Donna McAllister,  
Health Education Consultant  
Donna.McAllister@state.vt.us

VT Dept. for Children & Families:  
Priscilla White,  
Child Victim Treatment Director  
Priscilla.White@state.vt.us

# Best Practice for Implementing & Sustaining Comprehensive Sexual Violence Prevention in Schools

Developed by the Vermont Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force

1

Have your **policies in place**

1. **Know what policies are required by law** & understand **licensing** regulations
2. **Review your current** policies/protocols
3. **Institute and train on required and recommended** policies and protocols

## Required\* & Recommended

- ▶ Mandated Reporting for child abuse\*
- ▶ Hazing, bullying, and cyber-bullying\*
- ▶ Sexual harassment between students and by adult personnel\*
- ▶ Title IX\*
- ▶ Dating violence & sexual assault between students
- ▶ Domestic violence among adult personnel

2

Train your **teachers and staff**

- ▶ Train **all adults** in the **school building**
- ▶ Train at **orientation** and at **regular intervals**
- ▶ Remember to train **interim, temporary, and part-time** teachers and staff

## Key Content

- 1) Reporting abuse and mandated reporters
- 2) Understanding & preventing sexual abuse
- 3) Identification: Grooming behaviors
- 4) Identification: Signs & symptoms of sexual abuse/violence in children and youth
- 5) Responding to disclosures of sexual abuse or sexual violence

3

Educate **parents and community**

- ▶ **Encourage & empower** students to **share learning** with parents & communities
- ▶ Conduct **outreach through school communications** (e.g. newsletters, website)
- ▶ Offer **out-of-school prevention** activities

## Statewide References & Resources

[\*Technical Assistance Resource Guide\*](#)

[\*Vermont Health Education Grade Expectations\*](#)

[\*Commit to Kids\* resources for schools](#)

VT Agency of Education

VT Department for Children and Families

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

4

Talk with your **students**

## Include & Expand

- ▶ Health Education (know the expectations)
- ▶ Core curriculum (example: Language Arts)
- ▶ Peer learning opportunities
- ▶ Extracurricular activities