

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ON PREVENTING AND
RESPONDING TO SEXUAL AND DATING VIOLENCE:
ISSUED BY THE TASK FORCE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN EDUCATION**

Introduction:

The Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022 created the Task Force on Sexual Violence in Education – a joint interagency task force established by the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Attorney General. [Public Law 117-103, Section 1314]. The Task Force was directed to, among other things, develop recommendations for educational institutions on preventing and responding to sexual violence and dating violence at institutions of higher education, secondary schools, and elementary schools. Since the Task Force’s creation, it has held listening sessions with a variety of stakeholders and solicited stakeholder input through a [Request for Information](#) published in the *Federal Register* on January 24, 2024.

In response to the congressional directive, the Task Force developed these recommendations¹ with stakeholder input to support schools in developing and bolstering prevention and response approaches to sexual violence impacting their student bodies, including online.² These recommendations should be considered in addition to schools’ existing requirements to ensure that sexual and dating violence prevention and response policies, programs, initiatives, and activities comply with legal obligations, including [Title IX](#) and the Department of Education’s [Title IX regulations](#),³ the [Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act](#) (Clery Act) and its [regulations](#), other civil rights obligations including those required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and their applicable regulations, and other applicable laws.⁴

¹ This document provides recommendations to educational institutions generally, recognizing that some are applicable only to elementary schools and secondary schools or institutions of higher education, and some may be able to be implemented across institution type. These recommendations do not have the force and effect of law.

² This document contains resources that are provided for the user’s convenience. The inclusion of these materials is not intended to reflect the importance of the particular resource, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses, and websites to and for information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Task Force and the Task Force does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials.

³ The Department of Education’s 2024 Title IX regulations took effect on August 1, 2024, and apply to sex discrimination that allegedly occurred on or after August 1, 2024. As of September 13, 2024, pursuant to Federal court orders, the Department is currently enjoined from enforcing the 2024 Title IX regulations in the states of Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming; the Department is also currently enjoined from enforcing the 2024 Title IX regulations at the schools on the list located at <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/list-of-schools-enjoined-from-2024-t9-rule>. Per Court order, this list of schools may be supplemented in the future. The 2024 Title IX regulations do not currently apply in those states and schools. Pending further court orders, the Department’s [Title IX regulations, as amended in 2020](#), remain in effect in those states and schools. Any updates on the status of the 2024 Title IX regulations will be posted at <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/title-ix-and-sex-discrimination/sex-discrimination-overview-of>.

⁴ The Department of Education’s regulations implementing the Clery Act are at 34 C.F.R. § 668.46 and Section 504 are at [34 C.F.R. pt. 104](#). OCR also shares with the U.S. Department of Justice in the enforcement of another Federal civil rights law, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), which prohibits disability discrimination by public entities, regardless of whether they receive Federal financial assistance. The regulations implementing Title II are at [28 C.F.R. pt. 35](#).

Prevention of Sexual and Dating Violence

- Implement sexual and dating violence prevention approaches, including programs, education, support, and resources that are evidence-based or evidence-informed. Ensure they are tailored to meet the unique needs of the student population and centered on survivors' needs and lived experiences to avoid further harm or re-traumatization, particularly for historically marginalized and underserved communities.
- Partner with community organizations and stakeholders in the development and implementation of prevention programming, especially organizations that are designed to serve historically marginalized and underserved communities and that employ survivors in order to foster a supportive network.
- Consider how behaviors (e.g., drug or alcohol use) in educational environments intersect with sexual violence and harassment. Develop materials to address these behaviors in consultation with sexual assault and domestic violence organizations.
- Integrate and adopt age-appropriate and evidence-based or evidence-informed sexual health education programs and training initiatives, including bystander training across K-12, consistent with parental consent policies and requirements. Such programs and initiatives should take into consideration the community context and various factors including cultural considerations, race, language access, national origin, and sex.
- Implement sexual and dating violence prevention programs in a manner that is integrated with, and complementary to, sexual health education efforts, and when possible, include a component for parents on signs of dating violence and how to talk to their child. Such programs and initiatives should be evidence-based or evidence-informed. Information should be provided in a respectful, non-judgmental way that refrains from shaming participants, and should cover topics such as consent, healthy relationships, dating violence, sexual abuse, and the use of technology, including sexually explicit texting, online media, social media, cyberbullying, and cyber-harassment.
- Develop a process to regularly evaluate, review, and update policies, programs, and initiatives pertaining to sexual and dating violence prevention, as appropriate, in order to meet new and emerging needs, in consultation with students, faculty, staff, and community groups and local organizations that work on sexual violence and dating violence. This process could include a mechanism to regularly solicit input on the effectiveness of sexual and dating violence prevention policies, programs, and initiatives, such as campus climate surveys.

Resources:

- [Overview: Campus Violence Prevention](#)
- [Sexual Violence on Campus: Strategies for Prevention \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Preventing sexual violence on college and university campuses: lessons from research and practice \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Campus Engaging Men Toolkit](#)

- [Sexual Violence Prevention Resource for Action \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Select, Adapt, Evaluate | VetoViolence \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Dating Violence Prevention](#)
- [Dating Matters Teen Dating Violence Training for Educators | VetoViolence \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [What Works in Schools: Sexual Health Education | DASH | CDC](#)

Responding to Sexual and Dating Violence

- Tailor responses to sexual and dating violence to meet the unique needs of the student population, centering on survivors' needs and lived experiences to avoid further harm or re-traumatization, particularly for historically marginalized and underserved communities.
- Be prepared to offer a range of accommodations and supportive measures to students, faculty, and staff – including changes that may relate to class requirements, counseling, safety planning, leaves of absences, and supplementary education about sexual and dating violence – as warranted and consistent with Federal requirements to provide an educational environment free from discrimination on the basis of sex.
- Offer comprehensive information to students on available financial resources for survivors.
- Offer coordinated confidential access to 24-hour survivor services, as appropriate, across staff and service providers, both on and off campus.
- Offer alternative pathways, like restorative justice, to respond to sexual harassment complaints.
- Provide the necessary tools and create a safe environment for students to report sexual and dating violence on and off campus. Provide clear online reporting options, including avenues for both confidential and non-confidential reporting in order to facilitate survivors' access to support services.
- Partner with community hospitals and other health care providers as part of a coordinated community response to sexual and dating violence, subject to Federal and state laws protecting the privacy of student health information.
- Develop a process to regularly review and update policies, programs, and initiatives pertaining to sexual and dating violence, as appropriate, in order to meet new and emerging needs, in consultation with students, faculty, staff, and community groups and local organizations that work on sexual violence and dating violence. This process could include a mechanism to regularly solicit input on the effectiveness of sexual and dating violence response policies, programs, and initiatives.

Resources:

- [2024 Title IX Regulations: Pointers for Implementation](#)
- [2024 Title IX Regulations: Impact on Title IX Coordinator Duties](#)
- [Resource for Drafting Nondiscrimination Policies, Notices of Nondiscrimination, and Grievance Procedures under 2024 Amendments to the U.S. Department of Education’s Title IX Regulations](#)
- [Teen Dating Violence: Dynamics, Technology, and What Prosecutors Need to Know](#)
- [Toolkit: Responding to Transgender Victims of Sexual Assault](#)

Provide Needed Resources and Supports at Schools and on Campuses

- Provide universal trainings to school and campus staff on signs of sexual and dating violence and how to respond. Utilize a culturally responsive approach to trainings for school officials that address the particular backgrounds and experiences of faculty, staff, and students in the school community.
- Invest in well-trained faculty, staff, and medical professionals, including trainings on trauma-informed care and how to provide developmentally and culturally appropriate information.
- Support and encourage student-focused advocacy by engaging and regularly consulting with a student advisory board with representation that mirrors the student body’s diversity.
- Ensure that resources and supports are provided in a manner that is consistent with Federal requirements to provide meaningful participation to students who are English learners, and meaningful communication to parents who have limited English proficiency (LEP). Meaningful communication can be provided to parents who have LEP through accurate interpretation or translation.
- Ensure information about policies and programs is accessible to, and meets the individual needs of, people with disabilities, as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including through the provision of Braille and American Sign Language interpreters.
- Provide disability-related services and reasonable accommodations or modifications to survivors who have disabilities as needed, as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to ensure they have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the offered services, programs, and activities.
- Take proactive steps to educate and inform students about their rights under the Title IX and Clery Act processes, as well as available resources and services (including on campus, at school, and off campus).

Resources:

- [SOAR for School-Based Professionals: Creating a Safe Environment for Students](#)
- [Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents](#)
- [Dear Colleague Letter: Effective Communication](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions on Effective Communication for Students with Hearing, Vision, or Speech Disabilities in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)
- [Serving Survivors of Sexual Assault with Disabilities in College “What do we need to know?”](#)
- [Policy Considerations for Serving Student Survivors of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking with Disabilities](#)
- [Dating Matters® Guides to Healthy, Safe Relationships for LGBTQ+ Youth and Parents | VetoViolence](#)
- [Toolkit for Building a Human Trafficking School Safety Protocol](#)

Engage with Key Stakeholders

- Build strategic partnerships between administration officials, faculty, staff, and students on the development and implementation of gender-based violence prevention and response policies, programs, and initiatives.
- Engage with students, families, and community members through Student Advisory Boards, Community Advisory Boards, and Parent Advisory Boards when developing best practices. Where possible, provide incentives for their participation and expertise.
- Utilize student coaches and peer advisors and provide them with sufficient training, guidance, and supervision on preventing and responding to sexual and dating violence.
- Provide program and training sessions that are comprehensive, mandatory, and inclusive of the school community, and use approaches that consider the perspectives of the individual’s role in the school community, including, but not limited to, students, faculty, law enforcement, medical staff, information technology staff, and other staff.

- Collaborate and develop Memorandums of Understanding with community groups and local organizations that work on sexual violence and dating violence prevention and response, such as crisis centers, hospitals, and state and local organizations (including those supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Rape Prevention and Education program), and partner with organizations serving individuals from historically underserved backgrounds to ensure all students are being served.
- Take advantage of Federal government resources to prevent and respond to sexual violence and dating violence.
- Ensure policies, programs, and initiatives are flexible enough to address the needs of your school and the specific students it serves and that address online harassment, including AI-related misconduct.

Resources:

- [Program: Rape Prevention and Education Program | Sexual Violence Prevention | CDC](#)
- [Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner \(SANE\) Program Development and Operation Guide](#)
- [Integrating Victim Services into Policy: A Victim Services and Conduct Policy Tip Sheet](#)