

Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools & Programs for the Deaf (CEASD)

Position Paper

Safe Schools for all Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children

The *CEASD* believes that all deaf and hard of hearing children have a right to attend safe schools, free from violence and exploitation of all kinds including physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse and any and all treatment that does not respect the individual dignity of each student. Instances of violence and exploitation are reprehensible and unacceptable and require that administrators and staff in all schools and programs clearly communicate to all staff and students zero-tolerance for such behavior. Furthermore, any violent or exploitative behavior must be identified and responded to immediately and responses must involve all necessary child protective services and agencies, including law enforcement officials, in accordance with all local, state and Federal laws and regulations.

The *CEASD* believes that all schools and programs for deaf and hard of hearing students must develop and implement policies and procedures and staff training programs necessary to protect students from all forms of violence and exploitation, especially by all individuals who are part of the school community itself. The *CEASD* commends those schools and programs for deaf and hard of hearing students that have developed such policies and procedures, and expects that all member schools and educational programs have in place policies, procedures and training programs should include, as a minimum, the following:

- Carefully conducted and thorough background and criminal history checks on all employees in accordance with all state, local and Federal requirements and regulations.
- Staff development programs to train all members of the school community in the school's expectations, policies, and procedures with respect to responding to suspected exploitation.
- Staff development programs explaining the legal aspects of

exploitation, including reporting requirements and procedures for suspected instances of sexual, physical, emotional or physiological abuse.

While it is important for administrators of schools and programs for deaf and hard of hearing students to focus on policies and procedures, it is even more important to focus on prevention. The *CEASD* commends those schools and programs that regularly include education about self-respect & self-protection as part of their educational programs, and recommends that all of its member schools and programs provide at least the following:

- Staff development programs that train staff to identify and report potential perpetrators, potential victims, harassment behaviors including sexual harassment, ethnic or racial intimidation, bullying, symptoms of victimization, predictors and/or precipitants of potential violent behavior, etc.
- Programs for students about the dignity of oneself, self-protection, how to report any action they feel is a violation of their person, and how to respond to situations that might cause them to feel unsafe. Such programs should be presented at the developmental level of the child and be fully accessible in the child's preferred mode of communication.
- Programs for parents about child safety and protection

The *CEASD* believe that by expecting its member schools and educational programs to adopt and clearly communicate zero-tolerance expectations related to any and all situations which involve violence or exploitation of deaf and hard of hearing children, by expecting all of its member schools and programs to develop and implement policies and procedures that ensure school safety, and by expecting all of its member schools and programs to provide prevention programs for both students and staff, that a truly safe environment can be provided for all deaf and hard of hearing students. To support this goal, the *CEASD* Accreditation process will now set forth requirements in the above three areas – *zero tolerance, policies and procedures and prevention* – for its member schools and programs.

**Adopted by:
The CEASD Board of
Directors
October 24, 2002**