



Sexual Misconduct by Teachers Highlights Risk of Teacher-Student Texting

Sexual misconduct risk also includes social media "friending"

Concerns about teacher-student texting are under debate in Clark County, Nevada. This after a recent spate of sexual misconduct and molestation cases.

The *Las Vegas Sun* examined ten years of sexual misconduct cases by county educators (2005 to 2015). They discovered that half the cases involved private electronic communication between the teacher and the victim. Furthermore, from 2010 to 2015, 80% of sexual misconduct cases involved some form of private electronic communication. This included texting, email, and so forth. As a result, predatory teachers have been using text and email to groom their victims.

Four out of five teachers arrested for sexual molestation in Clark County had "voluminous" electronic communication with the victim. Moreover, the parents had no idea that it was happening.

As a result, the problem is so widespread that Nevada lawmakers are now considering legislation that strictly regulates electronic communication between teachers and students.

Nevada wouldn't be the first state to institute such a law. Louisiana instituted a regulation in 2009 which required all school employees to log, within 24 hours, any electronic communication with students which did not take place via school devices. A school district in Dayton, Ohio, prohibited teachers from adding students on social media or from sending texts to their students through their personal phones. Finally, in



California, the Folsom Cordova School District officially advised teachers to avoid personal or private contact with students via text or social media messaging.

Sexual Predation and Texting

The digital revolution has allowed predators to gain access to children as never before. Teenagers and even children have personal cellular devices. Texting is now one of the most popular ways for molesters to groom potential victims.



Kevin Lopez

Authorities were only alerted to the sex crimes of Kevin Lopez, a wrestling coach at California High School in San Ramon, California, after one of his victims' parents discovered suggestive text messages from Lopez on their son's phone. Lopez had been abusing three boys for over ten years, from 2003 to 2014.

A year before his arrest, a parent contacted school officials and reported Lopez's abuse of boys and girls. Yet the school did not contact police or Child Protective Services. Instead, they chose to conduct an internal investigation, which resulted in Lopez continuing to have access to kids.



Lopez's grooming methods were fairly typical. He began by paying special attention to one of his wrestling students. Then he started to exchange text messages with him outside of school hours. Finally resulting in eventually luring the minor into seeing him privately.

Possible Solutions to the Sexting Problem

To prevent and discourage the inappropriate use of personal email and SMS between teachers and students, many schools in America are changing the ways in which teachers and students communicate. Online educational platforms such as Remind and Classdojo provide secure, clean, and functional chat rooms and message boards. Here, teachers and students can communicate in ways which the school can monitor. Teachers can post homework assignments and class notes and give personal feedback to students while still remaining under the supervision of school officials. While teachers and students at many schools are not required to use these platforms to communicate, they do provide a much safer and better supervised method of communication which prohibits teachers from singling out and grooming their students.

Sources

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