



# Illinois State Board of Education

## Faith's Law Overview

June 2023

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# Background

Faith's Law is named after prevention advocate and child sexual abuse survivor Faith Colson, who graduated from an Illinois high school in the early 2000s. Faith was sexually abused by a teacher at her high school. Years later, during the course of legal proceedings related to the abuse, Faith learned that several adults within her high school suspected that the teacher's relationship with her was inappropriate but did not take appropriate action to report their concerns. As a result of her experiences, Faith pushed for change to state laws related to educator sexual misconduct in K-12 schools.



Photo credit: <https://www.riverfronttimes.com/author/faith-colson>

# Faith's Law Resource Guide

The Faith's Law Resource Guide was developed in Spring 2023 in consultation with relevant stakeholders. It provides guidance for pupils, parents or guardians, and teachers about sexual abuse response and prevention resources available in their community. It is linked on ISBE's Student Care webpage.



## **Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource Guide** **Pursuant to Public Act 102-0676, [105 ILCS 5/2-3.188](#)<sup>1</sup>**

Whether you are a student, parent or guardian, or an educator, this resource guide was developed to help you know where to find help in the event sexual abuse is suspected, reported, and/or being investigated. Being the support person to a victim of sexual abuse can create secondary trauma, and it's important to seek appropriate help and support not only for the primary victim but for yourself as well. Conversely, if you are the victim of abuse and feel unsupported by the adults in your life, help and hope are available.

All children have the right to grow up in safe and healthy communities that have welcoming and nurturing schools. Unfortunately, statistics point to child sexual abuse as a prevalent and ongoing issue that impacts thousands of



# Faith's Law Overview

Faith's Law is a combination of two pieces of legislation:

1. [Public Act 102-0676](#)
2. [Public Act 102-0702](#)

Both public acts created new requirements that take effect at different dates.

# Overview of Changes

## Requirements that were effective December 3, 2021

**Change:** Expanded the definition of “grooming” in the Illinois Criminal Code to include in-person acts, any conduct through a third party, and written communication.

**Action Needed:** Familiarize yourself with the new definition. See [Q-1 in the FAQ](#) for more information.

# Overview of Changes

## Requirements that were effective December 3, 2021

**Change:** Added grooming to the list of conduct that qualifies a child as an “abused child” under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

**Action Needed:** Mandated reporters must notify DCFS immediately when a mandated reporter has reasonable cause to believe a child is an abused or neglected child under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/3), including reasonable cause to believe that a child was a victim of grooming as defined by 720 ILCS 5/11-25. Call 1-800-25-ABUSE to make a report.



# Overview of Changes

## Requirements that were effective July 1, 2022

**Change:** Approved providers of professional development listed under 105 ILCS 5/21B-45(g) must provide educators with professional development opportunities that satisfy at least one of a list of topics, which now includes training on the physical and mental health needs of students, student safety, educator ethics, professional conduct, and other topics that address the well-being of students and improve the academic and social-emotional outcomes of students

**Action Needed:** No action needed unless you are a PD provider.



# Overview of Changes

## Requirements that were effective July 1, 2022

**Change:** The term "sexual misconduct" was defined in statute.

**Action Needed:** Familiarize yourself with the definition of sexual misconduct. See [page 9 in the FAQ](#) for more information.





# Overview of Changes

## Requirements that were effective July 1, 2022

**Change:** School districts, charter schools, and nonpublic schools must develop an employee code of professional conduct policy.

**Action Needed:** Review [Qs 6 – 10 in the FAQ](#). Then, create your school's policy and communicate it as required.



# Overview of Changes

## Requirements that will be effective July 1, 2023

**Change:** ISBE is required to develop and maintain a resource guide that will be available on its website and include guidance for pupils, parents or guardians, and teachers about sexual abuse responses and prevention resources available in their community, including the contact information of entities that provide services for victims of child sexual abuse and their families.

**Action Needed:** At the beginning of the school year, each school district, charter school, or nonpublic school shall notify the parents or guardians of enrolled students of the availability of the resource guide. Each school district, charter school, or nonpublic school shall furnish the resource guide to a student's parent or guardian at the request of the parent or guardian and may also make the resource guide available on its website.



# Overview of Changes

## Requirements that will be effective July 1, 2023

**Change:** A superintendent of the employing school board shall, in writing, notify the state superintendent of education and the applicable regional superintendent of schools of any license holder whom he or she has reasonable cause to believe has committed an act of sexual misconduct as defined in Section 22-85.5 of this Code.

Further, the state superintendent can initiate the process to revoke or suspend a license, endorsement, or approval issued under Article 21B for reasons including sexual misconduct.

**Action Needed:** Familiarize yourself with the definition of sexual misconduct and report as needed. See [page 9 in the FAQ](#) for more information.



# Overview of Changes

## Requirements that will be effective July 1, 2023

**Change:** School districts, charter schools, and nonpublic schools are required to notify students and parents of alleged sexual misconduct and when formal action is taken due to an allegation of sexual misconduct.

**Action Needed:** Review the "[Sexual Misconduct Allegation Notification Requirement](#)" section in the FAQ. See [page 9](#) for the definition of sexual misconduct as a reference.

# Overview of Changes

## Requirements that will be effective July 1, 2023

**Change:** Applicants must complete an employment history review prior to working at a school.

**Action Needed:** Review the "[Employment History Review Requirements](#)" section of the FAQ. Be sure to look at both forms linked that will need to be filled out during the hiring process going forward.



# Final Notes

- This presentation is not a comprehensive list of changes and requirements regarding Faith's Law, nor does it constitute legal advice.
- Please review both the "[Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource Guide](#)" and the "[Faith's Law Guidance and FAQ](#)" documents.



# Links

- [Template 1 - Sexual Misconduct Disclosure Form for Applicant](#)
- [Template 2- Authorization for Release and Former Employer Response re Sexual Misconduct Information](#)
- [Faith's Law Resource Guide](#)
- [Faith's Law Guidance and FAQ](#)



# Questions

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Please send an e-mail to [Faithslaw@isbe.net](mailto:Faithslaw@isbe.net) with any questions.

