

Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Ed.D.
Commissioner Nominee

GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
**DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION**




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TO: All Employees

FROM: Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington 
Commissioner Nominee

DATE: September 26, 2022

SUBJECT: **Sexual Abuse and Misconduct by Departmental Employees or Contractors Involving Students (Policy Memorandum No. 005-94)**

The Virgin Islands Department of Education is committed to protecting our students by creating and maintaining healthy and safe school environments. To ensure the safety of our students, a policy was developed regarding the conduct by employees that is sexually inappropriate in the school setting or of a criminal nature and will not be condoned by the VIDE.

Our policy, which became effective on July 28, 1993, is attached to this memorandum. As you will see, our policy formally and clearly states that sexual abuse, harassment, immorality, or misconduct by a school-based employee, Departmental employee, or school-based contractor involving a student is cause for termination. It further states that Departmental employees and school-based contractors are prohibited from engaging in physical contact with students except where health, safety, or educational purposes are being met. Students are to be encouraged to report all offensive physical contacts, sexual abuse, harassment, or misconduct to the appropriate Departmental officials without fear of retaliation. This policy was designed with two objectives in mind: (1) students deserve a school environment that is free from the adverse effects of sexual abuse and misconduct, and (2) the VIDE has a responsibility to maintain a healthy and safe school environment for every student.

To create healthy and safe school environments, the school districts must conduct thorough investigations and background checks of teachers, school-based employees, and school-based contractors for evidence of sexual misconduct by the applicant when making decisions as to hiring, transfers, retentions, or evaluations.

I believe we all must work together to make the Virgin Islands Department of Education's schools a safe environment. Thank you for your cooperation in our efforts.