



Gardaskóli 2 June, 2009

From the desk of the School Principal at Gardaskóli Middle School, Garðabæ, Iceland

Re: Blátt áfram* in Gardaskóli

Over the last few years during a time of fast changes in society, the responsibilities of adults working at schools has increased to also include the emotional and physical well being of its students. What has increased is the fact that school support staff is more involved and subject to knowing more about sensitive and serious issues that are a part of the student's life outside of school.

At Gardaskóli, key personnel from the school counselor's office and other support systems have attended training and received support from the organization, Blátt áfram, which provides Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) prevention education. At the same time the organization has provided CSA prevention education for students where open forums facilitated learning about important points about sexual and emotional abuse, its prevention and where to go for help. Following the prevention education at our school, cases or disclosure related to this issue increased.

With the support of Blátt áfram and their presenters, as well as the professional intervention of our support staff, these cases, including the individuals and their families, have been channeled to the right providers or authorities for further investigation, treatment or resolution for the victims and offenders.

With an objective, yet firm approach the organization, Blátt áfram, has supported the school to process, with confidence, cases that have involved the private matter of the students involved, but that have also been linked to the possible violation of the rights of the child, the law and legal ethics.

These working methods would not be possible without the school using qualified and professional approaches to these sensitive issues, utilizing a best practice approach and that the school and its staff are conscious of the important role they provide as a contact between the home and the local child protection agency. An important part of this process is also a good working relationship with the office of Social Services in the town of Gardabær.

Our decision to include child sexual abuse prevention education from Blátt áfram for the students at Gardaskóli has proven successful and does provide, according to my assessment, both the value of prevention education and intervention support for the school and its staff. Respectfully,

Ragnar Gíslason, School Principal of Gardaskóla, Garðabæ, Iceland

*(Blatt Afram, (pronounced: blout a-from) which translates as "Straight Forward," is the leading grass roots child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention organization in Iceland. Blatt Afram was formed in 2004 by twin sisters, Svava Brooks and Sigga Björnsdóttir who themselves were sexually abused as young children growing up in Iceland but who sought to turn around their misfortune by helping others.

