

CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION PREVENTION

Child abuse, neglect and exploitation are violations of children's human rights and an obstacle to their educational development. The board directs that staff shall be alert for any evidence of such abuse, neglect or exploitation. For purposes of this policy, "child abuse, ~~or~~ neglect or exploitation" shall mean:

- A. Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing death, disfigurement, skin bruising, impairment or physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function
- B. Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning
- C. Committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in the criminal code, or intentionally touching, either directly or through the clothing, the genitals, anus or breasts of a child for other than hygiene, child care or health care purposes.
- D. Committing acts which are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain or mental suffering.
- E. Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by the criminal code
- F. Failing to provide food, shelter, clothing, supervision or health care necessary to a child's health or safety
- G. Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child
- H. Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of the preceding actions

Child abuse can include abuse by another minor and so may be included in incidents of student misconduct.

When feasible, the district will provide community education programs for prospective parents, foster parents and adoptive parents on parenting skills and on the problems of child abuse and methods to avoid child abuse situations. The district shall also encourage staff to participate in inservice programs that deal with the issues surrounding child abuse.

The superintendent shall develop reporting procedures, including sample indicators of abuse and neglect, and shall disseminate the procedures to all staff. The purpose is to identify and report as soon as possible to the proper authorities all evidence of child abuse or neglect. Staff shall receive training regarding reporting obligations during their initial orientation and every three years after initial employment.

Certificated and classified staff are legally responsible for reporting all suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. A certificated or classified school employee who has knowledge or reasonable cause to believe that a student has been a victim of physical abuse or sexual misconduct by another school employee shall report such abuse or misconduct to the appropriate school administrator. The administrator shall report to the proper law enforcement agency if he or she has reasonable cause to believe that the misconduct or abuse has occurred as required under RCW 26.44.030. Under state law, staff are free from liability for reporting instances of abuse or neglect and certificated and classified staff are criminally liable for failure to do so.

Staff need not verify that a child has in fact been abused or neglected. Any conditions or information that may reasonably be related to abuse or neglect should be reported. Legal authorities have the responsibility for investigating each case and taking such action as is appropriate under the circumstances.

Cross References:	Board Policy 4310	Relations with the Law Enforcement and Child Protective Agencies
Legal References:	RCW 13.34.300	Failure to cause juvenile to attend school as evidence under neglect petition
	26.44.020	Child abuse--Definitions
	26.44.030	Reports--Duty and authority to make--Duty of receiving agency – Duty to notify – Case planning and consultation – Penalty for unauthorized exchange of information – Filing dependency petitions – Interviews of children – Records – risk assessment process
	26.44.070	Central registry of reported cases of child abuse
	28A.320.160	Alleged sexual misconduct by school employee- Parental notification – Information on public records act.
	28A.400.317	Physical abuse or sexual misconduct by school employees – Duty to Report – Training
	28A.620.010	Community education provisions-- Purposes

28A.620.020 43.43.830(6)	Community education provisions-- Restrictions Background checks--Access to children or vulnerable persons
WAC 388-15-009	Definition of child abuse, neglect or exploitation
AGO 1987, No. 9	Children—Child Abuse—Reporting by School Officials—Alleged Abuse by Student

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Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

Each school principal shall develop and annually review a program, of staff development activities that may include such topics as:

- Child growth and development
- Identification of child abuse and neglect
- Effects of child abuse and neglect on child growth and development
- Personal safety as it relates to potential child abuse and neglect
- Parenting skills
- Life situations/stressors which may lead to child maltreatment
- Substance abuse
- Recognizing factors that cause people to abuse others
- Resources available to assist individuals who may encounter an abuse situation

Reporting Responsibilities

All staff are required to report every instance of suspected child abuse or neglect. Staff are reminded of their immunity from potential liability for doing so. The following procedures are to be used in reporting instances of suspected child abuse:

- A. When there is reasonable cause to believe that a student has suffered abuse or neglect, staff who have firsthand knowledge shall immediately contact the nearest office of the child protective services (CPS) of the department of social and health services (DSHS). If this agency cannot be reached, the report shall be submitted to the police, sheriff, or prosecutor's office. Staff may request help from the principal, counselor or nurse to gather and prepare the needed information to report to CPS. The staff who has firsthand, direct knowledge is the person(s) responsible to make sure the incident is reported and the required reports are on file at the school. Discussing the concern with a principal, counselor, nurse or other district employees does not release the original reporter from their mandated duty to report any and all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to CPS.

Such contact must be made at the first opportunity, but in no case longer than forty-eight (48) hours. Staff shall also advise the principal regarding instances of suspected abuse or neglect and reports of suspected abuse that have been made to state authorities or law enforcement. In his/her absence the report shall be made to the nurse or counselor.

A staff member may wish to discuss the circumstances with an employee of CPS for assistance in determining if a report should be made. The Child Protective Service has the responsibility of determining the fact of child abuse or neglect. Any doubt about the child's condition shall be resolved in favor of making the report.

- B. A written report shall be completed and submitted to the principal or designee and kept on file at each school. The report shall include:
1. the name, address and age of the child;
 2. the name and address of the parent or person having custody of the child;
 3. the nature and extent of the abuse or neglect;
 4. any other information that may relate to the cause or extent of the abuse or neglect; and
 5. the identity, if known, of the person accused of inflicting the abuse.
- C. The district shall within forty-eight (48) hours of receiving a report alleging sexual misconduct by a school employee notify the parents of a student alleged to be the victim, target or recipient of the misconduct.

Abuse Indicators

Physical Abuse Indicators:

- A. Bilateral bruises, extensive bruises, bruises of different ages, patterns of bruises caused by a particular instrument (belt buckle, wire, straight edge, coat hanger, etc.).
- B. Burn patterns consistent with forced immersion in a hot liquid (a distinct boundary line where the burn stops), burn patterns consistent with a spattering by hot liquids, patterns caused by a particular kind of implement (electric iron, etc.) or instrument (circular cigarette burns, etc.).
- C. Lacerations, welts, abrasions.
- D. Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child.
- E. Injuries inconsistent with the child's age.
- F. Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation.

Emotional Abuse Indicators:

- A. Lags in physical development.
- B. Extreme behavior disorder.
- C. Fearfulness of adults or authority figures.
- D. Revelations of highly inappropriate adult behavior, i.e., being enclosed in a dark closet, forced to drink or eat inedible items.

Sexual Abuse Indicators:

Sexual abuse, whether physical injuries are sustained or not, is any act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation, including but not limited to incest, rape, carnal knowledge, sodomy or unnatural or perverted sexual practices. Indicators include:

- A. Child having difficulty sitting down.
- B. Child refusing to change into gym clothes (when he/she has been willing to change clothes in the past).
- C. Venereal disease in a child of any age.
- D. Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital or anal areas.
- E. Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint about what is wrong at home.
- F. Pregnancy at 11 or 12 with no history of peer socialization.

Neglect Indicators**Physical Neglect Indicators:**

- A. Lack of basic needs (food, clothing, shelter).
- B. Inadequate supervision (unattended).
- C. Lack of essential health care and high incidence of illness.
- D. Poor hygiene on a regular basis.
- E. Inappropriate clothing in inclement weather.
- F. Abandonment

Some Behavioral Indicators of Abuse:

- A. Wary of adult contact.
- B. Frightened of parents.
- C. Afraid to go home.
- D. Habitually truant or late to school.
- E. Arrives at school early and remains after school later than other students.

- F. Wary of physical contact by adults.
- G. Shows evidence of overall poor care.
- H. Parents describe child as "difficult" or "bad".
- I. Inappropriately dressed for the weather -- no coat or shoes in cold weather or long sleeves and high necklines in hot weather (possibly hiding marks of abuse).
- J. Exhibit behavioral extremes: crying often or never, unusually aggressive or withdrawn and fearful.

NOTE: Behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse. Together with other indicators they may warrant a referral.

Child abuse as defined by the statutes can be inflicted “by any person” and may include student-on-student abuse. These cases also require reporting to CPS, DSHS or law enforcement. Child abuse in this and all other cases requires two elements. First, there must be injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, negligent treatment or maltreatment. Second, there must be harm to the child’s health, welfare or safety.