

### **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 will be alert for any evidence of such abuse, neglect or exploitation. For purposes of these procedures, "child abuse, neglect or exploitation" will mean:

- A. Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing death, disfigurement, skin bruising, impairment of 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 will also encourage staff to participate in in-service programs that deal with the issues surrounding child abuse.

#### **Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention**

Each school principal will develop and implement an instructional program that will teach students:

- A. How to recognize the factors that may cause people to abuse others;

- B. How one may protect oneself from incurring abuse; and
- C. What resources are available to assist an individual who does or may encounter an abuse situation.

To facilitate such a program, staff development activities 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

### Reporting Responsibilities

Staff are expected to report every instance of suspected child abuse or neglect. Since protection of children is the paramount concern, staff should discuss any suspected evidence with the principal or nurse regardless of whether the condition is listed among the indicators of abuse or neglect.

Staff are reminded of obligation as district employees to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Professional staff are reminded of their legal obligation to make such reports. Staff are also reminded of their immunity from potential liability for doing 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. School staff will not make any student available for an investigative interview, with government officials, unless the child consents. If the child is under 12 years of age and the request is from law enforcement officials, the law enforcement official must obtain parental consent, a court order, a warrant, or stipulate the existence of exigent circumstances.

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 will 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 will be submitted to the police, sheriff, or prosecutor's office. Such contact must be made within forty-eight (48) hours. Staff will 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 will 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 will be resolved in favor of making the report.
- B. A written report will be submitted promptly to the agency to which the phone report was made. A copy of the report will be sent to the immediate supervisor, Superintendent or designee, and originator of the report. The report will 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 suspected abuse or neglect;
  4. Any evidence of previous abuse or 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. 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 will report such abuse or misconduct to the appropriate school administrator. The administrator will 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. The district will, 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.

Certificated and classified staff will receive training regarding their reporting obligations, under state law, of physical abuse or sexual misconduct by another school employee. This training will occur during their initial orientation and every three years after initial employment. (RCW 28A.400.317)

### **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 she/he 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: The above examples of behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not prove abuse has occurred, but provide indication for further investigation. 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.

- Policy References: Board Procedure P3045-1 Interviews and Interrogations of Students on School Premises
- 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  
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 Community education provisions- Restrictions  
43.43.830 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

June 26, 2001  
Revised: August 20, 2007  
Revised: June 12, 2012  
Revised: June 6, 2014