

Keeping Children Safe

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Responsibilities





Your Responsibilities



District Requirements

Policy and Regulation 3421:

- **Requires child abuse reporting consistent with the law**
- **Requires *all employees* to report child abuse or neglect**



General Child Abuse **Reporting Duty**

- **Must report at the first opportunity, but no later than 48 hours after you have “reasonable cause to believe” that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.**

RCW 26.44.030(1)(a)

Child Abuse Reporting



- Report to law enforcement:
 - Police: Tacoma Police: 798-4721
Fircrest Police: 565-1198
Ruston Police: 761-0272
Sheriff: 798-472, OR
 - Child Protective Services (State of Washington Child Abuse & Neglect/Protective Services):
983-6100 OR 593-2600
- Fill out report form (available at each school)
- Report each time have reasonable cause to report

Reporting Obligations



- Report when child tells you has been abused or neglected
- Report when have reasonable cause to believe child has been abused or neglected
 - Obligation includes information about date rape/ acquaintance rape
 - Required even when child begs you to not report
 - Contact police/sheriff if criminal activity such as sexual abuse/prostitution/pornography involved or if there is a health or safety emergency



Reporting Obligations

- Document the disclosure and any injuries
- Notify administrator of report
- Make written report (if notified CPS)



Additional reporting responsibility to principal/supervisor/program administrator:

Boundary invasion behaviors, such as:

- Inappropriate relationships with students
- Inappropriate conduct with students
- Things that do not add up between an employee and a student

Investigating Alleged Child Abuse/Neglect



Investigation is generally the responsibility of police/sheriff/CPS

- Interview child until have sufficient information that there has been abuse/neglect, by whom, where, when and then stop and report
- District will investigate issues involving abuse/neglect by staff or abuse by students at school, on bus or at school activity
 - District investigation coordinated with law enforcement to not jeopardize their investigation



Investigating Alleged Child Abuse/Neglect

- **Law enforcement is responsible for notifying parent of report of abuse/neglect**
 - Refer inquires to law enforcement.
 - * **Exception:** administrator's obligation to report abuse by District employee
- **Law enforcement may interview children at school without parental permission or advance notice**



Pierce County Child Abuse Protocol

- **CPS/law enforcement may interview staff**
- **Staff must provide records in their possession related to the child**
- **CPS/law enforcement may photograph the child to document his/her physical condition**
 - District staff may do this if requested by CPS or law enforcement
 - Document request
- **Police/sheriff have authority to remove child from school without court order**
 - CPS does not



Special School Employee Duty

If a school employee has knowledge or reasonable cause to believe that a student has been a victim of

physical abuse or

sexual misconduct by another employee, the employee must report to the appropriate administrator.

RCW 28A.400.317(1)



Reporting Responsibilities

- Any staff member who observes or becomes aware of any adult engaging in behaviors with a student that raises concerns must report that information **immediately** to his/her administrator.
- ✓ Includes sexual conduct by a school employee with a student who is at least 16 years of age or older but less than 21

RCW 9A.44.093 and .096

Sexual conduct includes:



- **Making a sexual advance toward a student (verbal, physical or in writing);**
- **Sexual contact with a student;**
 - Intentionally touching sexual or intimate parts
 - Does not include contact to extent necessary and appropriate to attend to student's hygienic or health needs
- **Sexually harassing a student; OR**
- **Taking steps that may lead to sexual involvement with a student.**



Conduct must be reported

**REGARDLESS OF THE STUDENT'S AGE
OR CONSENT.**

Staff who violate this prohibition will be discharged.

Certificated staff will be reported to OSPI.



Administrator's Duties

School administrator must cause a report to be made to law enforcement if he/she has reasonable cause to believe that sexual misconduct or abuse by a staff member (or volunteer) has occurred.

- * When making a reasonable cause determination, the administrator shall contact all parties involved in the complaint.

Examples of Behavior to Report Boundary Invasions



- √ Taking an undue interest in a student (i.e., having a "special" friend or a "special relationship" with a particular student).
- √ Giving gifts or money to the student for no legitimate educational reason.
- √ Engaging in peer-like behavior with students (i.e., being cool by being like one of the kids).
- √ Being overly "touchy" with certain students.

Examples of Behavior to Report Boundary Invasions



- √ Favoring certain students by giving them special privileges or treatment, e.g.:
 - Inviting/permitting certain students to go to the classroom at non-class times.
 - Allowing the student to get away with inappropriate behavior, such as leaving school.
- √ Being alone with the student behind closed doors at school.

Examples of Behavior to Report Boundary Invasions



- √ Engaging in inappropriate communications
 - Talking to the child about problems that would normally be discussed with adults (e.g., marital problems).
 - Talking to the child about the child's personal problems such that the adult becomes a confidant of the child when it is not the adult's job to do so.

Examples of Behavior to Report Boundary Invasions



- Making comments about student's body without legitimate educational reason
- Telling sexual jokes, engaging in sexual banter, using sexual innuendo with students
- Using phones, e-mail, text-messaging, instant messaging or personal web pages/social networking sites to discuss personal topics or interests with students.

Examples of Behavior to Report Boundary Invasions



✓ Initiating or extending contact beyond the school day.

- Taking the student on outings, away from protective adults.
- Giving a student a ride in the teacher's personal vehicle.

Examples of Behavior to Report Boundary Invasions



- √ Invading the child's privacy (e.g., walking in on the child in the bathroom, making inquiries into private life).
- √ Showing pornography to the student.
- √ Hugging, kissing, or other physical contact even when the student wants this attention.
- √ Any conduct similar to the above.

BLURRING BOUNDARIES



Occurs when a person establishes a secondary or dual relationship with another person.

This is also a ***boundary invasion***.

- Going beyond one's professional role.
- Establishing another type of relationship with a student or the student's family.
- Going to the student's home for personal reasons.
- Taking the student on personal outings, even with the parents' permission.
- Inviting a student to the employee's home without proper chaperones.



Why are these behaviors of concern?

- Boundary violations or boundary invasions are often part of a grooming process that can lead to sexual abuse.
- It is impossible to know if a boundary violation may be a grooming behavior until we know the outcome of the relationship or the intent of the staff member.



By targeting boundary invasion behavior, we are focusing on preventing sexual abuse of students.

Avoiding allegations of misconduct



- **Communications with students:**
 - o E-mails: Do not use personal accounts
 - o Text messages: Do not use
 - o Phone calls: Don't give out personal phone number
Don't make or take personal phone calls with students
Communicate through parents
 - o Social websites (e.g., MySpace/Facebook): Set to private
- **Avoid personally transporting students**



Keep Our Students Safe