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, neglect or exploitation" shall 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 state law, 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 state law;
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; and/or
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 may provide community education programs for prospective parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, and guardians 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 in-service programs that deal with the issues surrounding child abuse.

Classified and certified staff are legally responsible for reporting all suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS). 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 CPS and 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. Under state law staff are free from

liability for reporting instances of abuse or neglect and professional 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 must 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 Other Government Agencies

Legal References:

RCW 13.34.300 Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend school as evidence to neglect petition
RCW 26.44.020 Definitions
RCW 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 — Investigations — Interviews of children — Records — Risk assessment process
RCW 28A.320.160 Alleged sexual misconduct by school employee — Parental notification — Information on public records act
RCW 28A.400.317 Physical abuse or sexual misconduct by school employees — Duty to report — Training
RCW 28A.620.010 Purposes
RCW28A.620.020 Restrictions — Classes on parenting skills and child abuse prevention encouraged
RCW 43.43.830 Background checks — Access to children or vulnerable persons - Definitions
WAC 388-15-009 What is child abuse or neglect?
AGO 1987, No. 9 Children — Child Abuse — Reporting by School Officials — Alleged Abuse by Student

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