

CHILD ABUSE AND

Child abuse or neglect, including 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 child abuse or neglect, including exploitation.

For purposes of this policy, the term "child" means anyone under the age of 18.

"Child abuse or neglect" means:

- A. Injury of a child by any person under circumstances which cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety;
- B. Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation by any person under circumstances which cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety; or
- C. The negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to the child.

Physical discipline of a child, including the reasonable use of corporal punishment, is not considered abuse when it is reasonable and moderate and is inflicted by a parent or guardian for the purposes of restraining or correcting the child.

Staff should not focus on a person's mental status to determine if they have committed child abuse or neglect. The law governing mandated reporting does not allow for exceptions for people with medical conditions that may mitigate the intent for committing child abuse or neglect.

The superintendent will develop reporting procedures and provide them to all staff on an annual basis. The purpose is to identify and timely report all evidence of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. Staff will receive training regarding reporting obligations during their initial orientation and every three years after initial employment.

All staff are responsible for reporting all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities and/or the appropriate school administrator. Under state law, staff are free from liability for reporting a reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. However, failing to report the incident may result in criminal liability regardless of whether the authorities determine the incident is provable in a subsequent legal proceeding.

Staff need not verify that a child has been abused or neglected. Legal authorities have the responsibility for investigating each case and taking appropriate action under the circumstances.

Cross References:

Board Policy 4310 District Relationships with Law Enforcement and other Government Agencies

3226 - Interviews and Interrogations of Students on School Premises

4265 - Community Education Program

5253 - Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries

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

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

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

WAC 110-30-0030 What is child abuse or neglect?

AGO 1987, No. 9 Children — Child Abuse — Reporting by School Officials — Alleged Abuse by Student

Management Resources:

2015 - June Policy Issue

2010 - April Issue

Policy News, April 2010 Child Abuse Interviews at Schools

Policy News, February 2007 Physical Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Notice Requirements

Policy News, June 1999 23% of districts out-of-compliance on child abuse policies

Classification: Encouraged

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