



Los Angeles Unified School District

Division of District Operations

Breaking the Silence

2017 Spring Child Abuse Awareness Training

This training is about recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse. It is to be used in collaboration with and as a supplement to state, federal and District policies.



Related LAUSD Policies

- **MEM-6128.4** Administrator Certification Online System 2016-2017 For School Sites and Offices (8-15-2016)
- **BUL-1347.3** Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Requirements (8-19-2016)
- **BUL-6532.1** Protocols and Procedures to Report, Reassign and Investigate Allegations of Employee Misconduct (5-23-2016)
- **BUL-3349.1** Sexual Harassment Policy (Student-to-Student, Adult-to-Student, and Student-to-Adult) (8-6-2014)
- **Child Abuse Awareness Training**, <http://caat.lausd.net>
- **BUL-4748.0** Ethics Policies (5-18-2009)
- **BUL-5688.1** Social Media Policy for Employees and Associated Persons (1-29-2015)
- **BUL-5167.0** Code of Conduct with Students (7-1-2010)

Child Abuse Statistics

- 62.7% of alleged child abuse and neglect reports were made by professionals (teachers, law enforcement, lawyers, and social services).
- 75% of victims were neglected.
- 17% of victims were physically abused.
- 8.3% of victims were sexually abused.
- 6.8% of victims also experienced other types of maltreatment, such as threatened abuse, parent drug/alcohol abuse, or safe relinquishment of a newborn.
- 83.2% of perpetrators were between the ages of 18 and 44 years.
- An estimated 1,580 children died in 2014 from child abuse in the United States. This number represents almost 5 children per day.
- 79.3% of child abuse deaths are perpetrated by one of the parents.

Reasonable Suspicion

For purposes of suspected child abuse/neglect reporting, "reasonable suspicion" means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect.

- "Reasonable suspicion" does not require certainty that child abuse or neglect has occurred nor does it require a specific medical indication of child abuse or neglect; any "reasonable suspicion" is sufficient.
- Child abuse facts or allegations can be brought to the attention of mandated reporters from any source, including but not limited to: the alleged victim, the alleged victim's friend, a journal, a colleague, or anonymous source.

Reports may be from any source and may be spoken or written.

Child Abuse Definitions



- **Physical Abuse** can be external or internal and includes injuries such as bruises, welts, burns, or cuts inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. Hazing may constitute physical abuse.
- **Neglect** is the failure to provide adequate care or supervision.
- **Willful Cruelty or Unjustifiable Punishment** is any situation where any person willfully causes, inflicts or permits unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering, or permits the child to be placed in a situation in which the child's person or health is endangered.
- **Mental Suffering, Emotional Abuse** is mental suffering harm that has been inflicted upon a child and endangers his or her emotional well-being.

Child Abuse Definitions cont.

- **Sexual Abuse** includes rape, statutory rape, rape in concert, incest, sodomy, lewd or lascivious acts upon a child, oral copulation, penetration of a genital or anal opening, including the use of any object, touching the genitals or intimate parts or the clothing covering them, or child molestation.
- **Lewd and lascivious** behavior is any unlawful and unwelcomed act committed for the purpose of arousing the libido or sexual interest of the individual or the person towards which this action is directed.
- **Lewd conduct** includes pornography, prostitution, or indecent exposure.
- **Sexual** innuendos may be considered a lewd conduct.
- **Hazing** may constitute physical or sexual abuse.



Child Abuse Definitions cont.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking occurs when a child is treated as a commercial sexual object in exchange for money or something of value. It may also include conduct or encouragement of activities related to pornography. Any minor who is engaged in commercial sexual activity whether as a suspected victim, recruiter, or exploiter, must be reported as a victim of child abuse.

- Signs that a child is a victim include:
 - behavior or attire that is not normative for their age
 - tattoos and brandings of bar codes, symbols of wealth (e.g., dollar signs, gold coins), and names
 - frequently runs away from home
 - frequent absences with suspicious or scripted explanations;
 - has an adult “boyfriend,” “daddy” or “auntie” with whom the child appears unusually deferential

Reporting Guidelines by Age

Reportable victims of suspected child abuse include any individual under age 18.

- **Sexual conduct between consenting parties** may or may not constitute child abuse based on the totality of the circumstances (e.g., if the act is natural and healthy sexual exploration). However, under the law, certain conduct between parties requires mandated reporters to report, such as “lewd and lascivious” conduct or sexual intercourse involving a minor must be reported if the minor is under 14 and the partner is age 14 years or over.
- **Non-consensual acts of sexual abuse** must be reported. In instances of suspected child-on-child sexual abuse, it may be appropriate to report both children as victims of suspected child abuse as many children who perpetrate abuse may themselves be victims of abuse.

Mandated Reporters

All employees are mandated reporters, which include, but are not limited to:

- School personnel
- Medical personnel
- Law enforcement personnel
- Counselors
- Clergy
- Photography and film developers



Mandated reporters *with reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect* must:

- 1) Call an appropriate local law enforcement agency or Department of Children Family Services (DCFS) **immediately or as soon as practically possible** (site administrator should provide class coverage if needed); and
- 2) Submit the written report to the agency called within 36 hours of receiving the information.

Authorized Child Protective Agencies

- Los Angeles Police Department, (213) 486-0530
- Los Angeles Sheriffs' Department Stations – Please refer to [BUL-1347.3](#), Attachment A, page 2, for phone numbers in your area.
- Department of Child and Protective Services, (800) 540-4000
- <https://mandreptla.org/> - electronic submissions of Child Abuse reports for mandated reporters
- Los Angeles School Police is NOT a child protective services agency and CANNOT take reports.



Legal Obligations

- **State law provides immunity** from civil or criminal liability for mandated reporters who file suspected child abuse reports.
- **Failure to comply** with mandated reporting requirements may subject an employee to:
 - **professional liability**, as well as discipline, demotion, dismissal, and the possible suspension or revocation of credentials, and
 - **personal civil liability** which can result in the cost of defense and subsequent related damages the child incurs, if any, and
 - **criminal liability** of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in the county jail for a maximum of six months, a fine up to \$1,000, or both.

Legal Obligations cont.

Under the law, mandated reporters must report all forms of suspected child abuse or neglect, which include:

- Sexual abuse
- Physical injury or death inflicted by other than accidental means upon a child by another person,
- Neglect
- The willful harming or injuring of a child or the endangering of the person or health of a child
- Unlawful corporal punishment or injury
- Serious emotional damage
- Commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking

Clarify

You may clarify to determine whether reportable abuse has occurred:

- Tell me about your drawing.
- Tell me about these bruises.
- Tell me what happened.



Do Not Investigate

DO NOT corroborate the allegations with witnesses or the accused.

DO NOT remove clothing to inspect the underclothing, breast, buttocks or genitalia.

- Any indication of abuse observed during a child's examination may be photographed; however, these photographs may only be given to the child protective agency, along with the report. No removal of clothing to inspect the underclothing, breast, buttocks or genitalia is permitted.

DO NOT ask leading questions:

- *Did your daddy do this to you?*
- *Where else did he touch you?*
- *Did anyone tell you to keep this a secret?*



What if the Accused Perpetrator is a District Employee?

- **Mandated Reporters must** file the Suspected Child Abuse Report if they have reasonable suspicion of abuse, regardless of who the perpetrator is.
- The mandated reporter must advise the employee's supervisor of the suspected inappropriate conduct to ensure the safety of the children.
- The accused may be reassigned during the investigation.
- Once the child protective agency has completed its investigation or confirms District officials may initiate their administrative investigation, the administrator shall cooperate with the agency in a coordinated manner to investigate the alleged inappropriate conduct.



Group Discussions



This is a Sensitive Subject

- We recognize there are various levels of understanding and experience with this topic. Please participate to the extent of your comfort level.
- Be mindful of others' feelings and reactions to the scenarios and discussions.



Breakout Sessions

Discuss your vignettes in small groups.

- At what point do you have a reasonable suspicion of Child Abuse?
- What, if any, additional information do you need to determine if reasonable suspicion occurs?
- Is there possible employee misconduct (e.g., sexual harassment, violation of Code of Conduct with Students, violation of Code of Ethics)?
- How will you proceed? Who will you notify? Relate each vignette to your school level.
- When complete review recommended responses.



A Mother's Message

(All locations must use this vignette)



The campus security brings Talia to your office. She was caught engaging in sexual activity with three boys behind the bungalows. Talia is indignant and adversarial. She has been a struggling student with erratic attendance. She recently reunited with her mother after having been in foster placement. You call her mother, who storms in later that day annoyed that you bothered her. You explain the situation. Mother responds, “Talia doesn’t need to waste her time on school. She is so pretty that men pay for her looks.” They walk out together. What do you do?

(For more information about Commercial Sex Trafficking of Minors, please visit the LAUSD Office of Human Relations, Diversity and Equity at <http://achieve.lausd.net/human-relations>)

Be a Man

- You overhear Mr. Garcia, the teacher in the room next to you, telling Johnny to “be a man” and calling him, “a fag, a pansy, and a queer.” He degrades Johnny in front of the other students who laugh and often join in on the name calling. What do you do?

Large Group Debrief

- What items provoked discussion in your group? Why?
- What were your challenges? How did you resolve them?
- What other conversations occurred in your group?

Child abuse and molestation are not always obvious. We hope these activities sparked important conversations on keeping our children safe.

Professional Conduct

Professional behavior is a priority

Consider how behavior can be perceived. Be sure that your behavior is beyond reproach at all times.



Maintain appropriate relationships

While the District encourages the cultivation of positive relationships with students, employees are reminded that we expect them to use good judgment and are cautioned to avoid any possible or perceived breach of responsible, ethical behavior.

Professional Conduct cont.

- **Be a role model**

Your responsibility as a professional is to model and teach appropriate boundaries with students and colleagues.

- **Be conscious of physical contact or touching**

Appropriate touch is determined by your job setting and duties. Nurses, preschool teachers, and middle school teachers, for example, have different roles and guidelines for appropriate touch. You are responsible for guarding against possible misunderstandings.



Recommended Ways to Support Children

- **Protect** by maintaining structure, stability and consistency
- **Connect** through interaction, activities and resources
- **Model** caring, compassion and empathy
- **Teach** students to use positive coping strategies

Existing Curriculum and Resources to Support Students

- Second Step Curriculum and Training is a K-8 classroom-based program that teaches social and emotional skills for violence prevention. It is organized by grade level, teaches children to practice empathy, problem-solving skills, risk assessment, decision-making, and goal-setting.
- Health Education curriculum K-12. Standards-based lessons cover growth and development with proper identification of body parts, safe and unsafe touch, how to tell an adult if you don't feel safe, healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
- Health Education classes Grades 7 and 9, comprehensive health education standards based instruction in mental, emotional and social health, injury prevention, sexual health.

We all have an ethical, moral
and legal obligation to support
our children

We are entrusted with the most precious gifts in the world – children!

Let's do our part to keep them safe.

