

Child Abuse and Neglect, Reporting to Law Enforcement Agencies

Child abuse and neglect are both a violation of children's human rights and an obstacle to their educational development. All district personnel shall be alert for any evidence of such abuse or neglect. When any district employee has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, he or she is required to report the abuse or neglect, or cause a report to be made, to child protective services or the proper law enforcement agency within forty-eight (48) hours. For that reason, under state law, school personnel are free from liability for reporting instances of suspected abuse or neglect and are criminally liable for failure to do so.

A certified 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 shall report such abuse or misconduct to the appropriate school administrator. The administrator shall report to the proper law enforcement agency if he or she has reasonable cause to believe that the misconduct or abuse has occurred.

The superintendent shall develop reporting procedures, including sample indicators of abuse and neglect, and shall disseminate the procedures to all school personnel. The purpose is to identify and report as soon as possible to the proper authorities all evidence of child abuse or neglect. Staff shall receive training regarding reporting obligations during their initial orientation and every three years after initial employment.

Personnel need not verify that a child has in fact been abused or neglected. It is sufficient to report any conditions or information that may reasonably be related to abuse or neglect. It is then the responsibility of the proper authorities to investigate each case and take such action as is appropriate under the circumstances.

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 or 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 – Purpose
		28A.620.020	Community education provisions – Restrictions
		43.43.830(6)	Background checks – Access to children or vulnerable persons
	WAC	388-15-130(3)	Definition of child abuse, neglect or exploitation

RSD #400

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