

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, the term “child” means anyone under the age of 18 and/or any current student of the district, including home-schooled students or any other person classified as a student in the district’s database.

“Child abuse, neglect or exploitation” means:

- 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. Attempting, committing or allowing any sexual offense against a child as defined in the criminal code. This definition also includes any communications with a child for immoral purposes or viewing, possessing, or distributing any sexually explicit images of a child. It also includes intentionally contacting directly or through the clothing, the genitals, anus or breasts of a child unless the contact is necessary for the child’s hygiene or health care. This also includes a child’s intentional or coerced contact with anyone’s genitals, anus, or breasts.
- D. Committing acts that are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury. These 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 the criminal code.
- 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 a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child.
- H. Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of the preceding actions.

Children (including other students), family members, and any other adult can engage in child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This may include incidents of student on student misconduct. Staff should report all incidents of abuse regardless of the age of the person who engages in it.

Subject to the definition above, staff should not focus on a person’s mental status to determine if she or he has committed child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The law governing mandated reporting does not allow for exceptions for people with medical conditions that may mitigate the intent for committing child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. When feasible, the district will provide community education programs for prospective parents, foster parents and adoptive parents 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 address the issues surrounding child abuse.

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

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

49 Staff need not verify a report that a child has been abused, neglected or exploited. Any
50 conditions or information that may be reasonably related to child abuse, neglect or exploited
51 should be reported. Legal authorities have the responsibility for investigating each case and
52 taking appropriate action under the circumstances.

53	Cross References:	Board Policy 3226	Interviews and Interrogations of Students on
54			School Premises
55		4310	District Relations with the Law Enforcement and
56			Government Agencies
57		4265	Community Education Program
58	Legal References:	RCW 13.34.300	Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend
59			school as evidence under neglect petition
60		26.44.020	Child abuse — Definitions
61		26.44.030	Reports — Duty and authority to make — Duty
62			of receiving agency — Duty to notify — Case
63			planning and consultation — Penalty for
64			unauthorized exchange of information —
65			Filing dependency petitions — Interviews of
66			children — Records — Risk assessment
67			process
68		28A.620.010	Community education provisions — Purposes
69		28A.620.020	Community education provisions — Restrictions
70		43.43.830	Background checks — Access to children or
71			vulnerable persons
72		28A.320.160	Alleged sexual misconduct by school employee
73			— Parental notification — Information on
74			public records act.
75		28A.400.317	Physical abuse or sexual misconduct by school
76			employees — Duty to Report — Training
77			
78		WAC 388-15-009	Definition of child abuse, neglect or exploitation
79		AGO 1987, No. 9	Children — Child Abuse — Reporting by School
80			Officials — Alleged Abuse by Student

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82 Management Resources:

83	<i>Policy News</i> , June 2015	
84	<i>Policy News</i> , April 2010	Child Abuse Interviews at Schools
85	<i>Policy News</i> , February 2007	Physical Abuse and Sexual Misconduct
86		Notice Requirements

