

POLICY NO. 5470
Adopted 3-14-79
Revised 1-8-86
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CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

POLICY:

Washington State law (RCW 26.44) provides that school districts and other care providers protect children from any kind of abuse or neglect. This policy defines child abuse and neglect as "[T]he injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child by any person under circumstances which harms or jeopardizes the child's health, welfare, or safety."

This definition does not authorize unreasonable interference with child-raising practices, including "reasonable" parental discipline, which are not injurious to the child's health, welfare, and safety.

Professional school personnel are "mandatory reporters" who are legally obligated to contact Child Protective Services or the proper law enforcement agency within forty-eight (48) hours of developing "reasonable cause" to believe that a child, adult dependent, or developmentally disabled person has suffered abuse or neglect.

Any district 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 as required under RCW 26.44.030.

Staff members shall use the District Reporting Procedure including completion of the written Child Abuse and Neglect Report form when they have "reasonable cause" to believe abuse or neglect has occurred. These reports shall be maintained and disseminated with due regard to the privacy of all persons referenced in each report.

School employees shall receive training regarding their reporting obligations upon hire and every three years thereafter.

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PROCEDURES:

1. Professional school personnel shall include, but not be limited to, teachers, counselors, administrators, child care facility personnel, and school nurses.
2. Any professional school personnel who has "reasonable cause to believe" a school-age child has suffered child abuse or neglect shall immediately inform the school nurse, counselor, or school principal, or identified school resource person of the incident.
3. The person who has "reasonable cause to believe" that child abuse or neglect has occurred shall be responsible to ensure that oral referral is made to the appropriate state agency within forty-eight (48) hours. If imminent danger is present, referral shall be made within the school day.
4. The oral report shall be followed by a written "Child Abuse and Neglect Report" (5470F) signed by the principal or designated professional school personnel. Copies of the report are to be distributed as follows: original to state agency called and copy in the principal's file.
5. Any district 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 as required under RCW 26.44.030.
6. The District shall within forty-eight (48) hours of receiving a report alleging sexual misconduct notify the parents of a student alleged to be the victim, target, or recipient of the misconduct.