

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" shall mean:

- 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, either 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. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain or mental pain.
- 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 injury to, or creating 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 all for exceptions for people with medical conditions that may mitigate the intent for committing child abuse, neglect or exploitation.

When feasible, the district will encourage the offering of 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 deal with the issues surrounding child abuse.

The superintendent shall 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, neglect or exploitation to the proper authorities. Staff shall 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, neglect, and exploitation 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, neglect or exploitation. 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 a report that a child has been abused, neglected or exploited. Any conditions or information that may be reasonably related to child abuse, neglect or exploitation should be reported. Legal authorities have the responsibility for investigating each case and taking appropriate action under the circumstances.

Cross References: Board Policy 4310 Relations with the Law Enforcement and Child Protective Agencies

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
28A.620.010 Community education provisions — Purposes
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
AGO 1987, No. 9 Children — Child Abuse — Reporting by School Officials — Alleged Abuse by Student