



Los Angeles Unified School District

Breaking the Silence

Child Abuse Awareness Training

March 2013

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-4207.5 Administrator Certification Form
- BUL-1347.2 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures
- BUL-3357.1 Employee-to-Student Sexual Abuse and Related Discipline Policy
- BUL-3349.0 Sexual Harassment Policy (Student-to-Student, Adult-to-Student, and Student-to-Adult)
- Child Abuse Awareness Training, <http://caat.lausd.net>
- BUL 4748.0 Ethics Policies
- BUL 5688.0 Social Media Policy for Employees and Associated Persons
- BUL 5167.0 Code of Conduct with Students

Child abuse statistics

- 1 in 6 boys and 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused by age 18
- Less than 10% of sexual molestation is reported
- 80% of perpetrators are married
- 90% of molesters are male relatives or trusted friends of the family
- 93% of molesters are religious
- 97% of molesters are heterosexual men, regardless of the sex of their target
- Serial molesters have an average of 350 victims
- Children are more likely to be abused in foster placement than in their own homes

Child abuse



- **Physical Abuse** can be external or internal and includes injuries such as a bruise, welt, burn, or cut inflicted on a child by other than accidental means by another person.
- **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 willful harm that has been inflicted upon a child and endangers his or her emotional well-being.

Child abuse

- **Sexual Assault** 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.
- **Sexual exploitation** includes conduct or encouragement of activities related to pornography depicting minors and promoting prostitution by minors.
- **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.



Reporting guidelines by age

Consensual sexual acts or “lewd and lascivious” conduct involving a minor **must** be reported in the following circumstances:

- a. The minor is under 14 and the partner age is 14 years or older and are engaged in consensual sexual intercourse; or
- b. The minor is under 16 and the partner age is 18 years or older and are engaged in consensual sexual intercourse; or
- c. The minor is 14 or 15 years of age and the partner is 10 or more years older and are engaged in “lewd and lascivious conduct.”

Mandated reporters

All employees who have contact with children or other vulnerable populations in the ordinary course of their work are mandated reporters.

Mandated reporters include:

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



District employees are mandated to report any reasonable suspicion even if the suspected offender is a colleague.

- A telephone report must be made to an authorized Child Protective Agency immediately, or as soon as possible.
- A written report must be filed within 36 hours of becoming aware of the incident.

Authorized Child Protective Agencies

- Los Angeles Police Department, (213) 486-0530
- Los Angeles Sheriff's Office, (323) 267-4800
- Department of Child and Protective Services, (800) 540-4000
- <https://mandreptla.org/> - electronic submissions of Child Abuse reports for mandated reporters
- <http://schoolsafety.lausd.net> – links to DCPS
- 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 this policy 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

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

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.

Examples of reasonable suspicion:

- Does the child have sexualized behavior or knowledge that is not age-appropriate? (see hand out)
- Do you suspect that there is sexually inappropriate behavior between a child and an adult?
- Is there a pattern of behaviors that does not have a plausible explanation?

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

Clarify not Investigate

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 ask children to remove or lift clothing to show you marks.

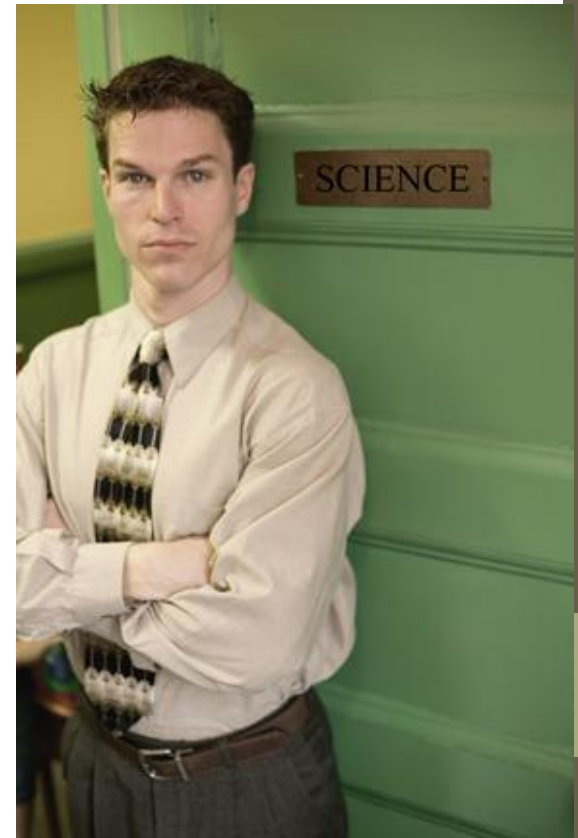
DO NOT ask leading questions

- *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 relocated during the investigation.
- The District will conduct its own investigation and cooperate with the investigation of Child Protective Services.



Group Discussions

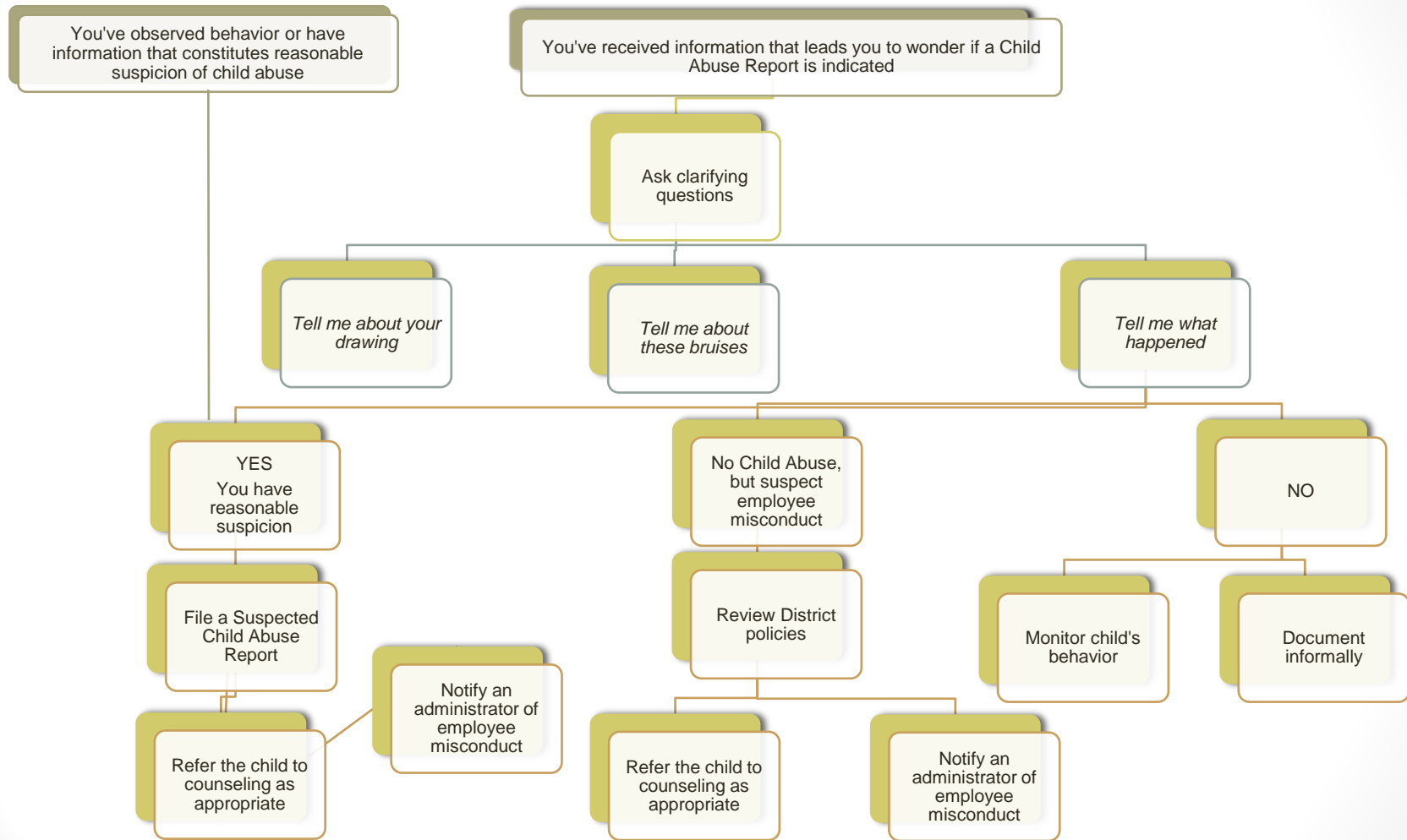
This is a sensitive subject

We recognize there are various levels of understanding and experience with this topic. Please participate to the extent of your comfort level.

Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, be mindful of others' feelings and reactions to the scenarios and discussions.



Decision Making Tree



BUL-1347.2 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures
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Break out sessions

- In small groups, 6-8, discuss your vignette(s).
- 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 Friendly Slap?

You notice that Ms. Hardy, the track coach, slaps her male students on the rear end.

A complaint has never been lodged.
She never touches her female students.



A Parent's Suspicion

A parent tells you that she is concerned that her daughter, Rachel, is spending too much time with a certain male teacher. One day when the daughter did not show up at the scheduled pick-up time, the parent went to the teacher's room to locate her daughter. Finding a locked door, the parent knocked for a long time. When the teacher finally answered the door, the parent saw Rachel, whose clothes were disheveled, exit through a back door. Rachel is adamant that nothing improper occurred.

A Weekend Event

You are at an amusement park with your family on a weekend. You see Paul, a teacher from your school, kissing and holding hands with a young girl you think you recognize as a student from your school. They don't see you.



Dropsy

Tasha tells you that, several times over the last few weeks, Mr. Sweeney has accidentally dropped objects (paper clips, erasers, etc.) into her lap and reaches to get them. She says that his hand seems to linger and makes her feel uncomfortable. She tells you that she has seen him do it to other girls too.



Picture It

When you arrive at work in the morning, you find an envelope addressed to you that had been slid under your door. It contains pictures of Shawna, a female student, sitting on the lap of Mr. Jones, the Assistant Principal.



Unwanted Attention

A female student tells you that Mr. Harold keeps staring at her breasts and she wants to know how to deal with it.



Large group debrief

- Were these vignettes realistic?
- Did everyone in your group agree on how to proceed?
- Was additional information needed to help guide your decisions?
- What were your challenges?
- How did you resolve them?

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 [mis]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

- **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 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: a 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.
K-8
- Health Education curriculum K-12. Standards-based lessons utilizing textbooks. Standards 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.

Existing curriculum and resources to support students

- Health education classes Grades 7 and 9, comprehensive health education standards based instruction in mental, emotional and social health, injury prevention, sexual health.
- An upcoming child abuse awareness training will include a component for students, with awareness and educational materials. More information will be forthcoming.

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.

