



# Breaking the Silence

## Child Abuse Awareness Training

# Dropsy



### The Scenario

Tasha tells you that several times over the past few weeks, Mr. Sweeney has “accidentally” dropped objects such as paper clips and pencils onto her lap. She said that when he reaches to retrieve them, that his hand seems to linger, which makes her feel uncomfortable. She said she has seen him do it to other girls too. What do you do?

### Discussion Begins

### What do you do?

**Do you report?** If so, to whom? If so, when? If you don't, what might happen to Tasha? To other students? To the teacher? To you? To your school? To LAUSD?

If you report and the Department of Children and Family Services or Local Law Enforcement Agency tells you...

...to **handle it administratively**, what do you do next?

...**they will investigate**, what do you do next?

### Filing a Report

If an employee does not have reasonable suspicion of child abuse, he/she may ask clarifying questions; however, if an employee has reasonable suspicion, he/she must file a Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) without further questioning.

In order to comply with the mandated reporting requirements, an employee must always file a SCAR if he/she has reasonable suspicion of child abuse, even if the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) or the

Local Law Enforcement Agency indicates to “handle it administratively.”

Required steps for filing a SCAR:

1. Phone call immediately or ASAP to a Child Protective Agency (CPA)
2. Written report mailed to the CPA within 36 hours of receiving the information

SCARs must be filed with a CPA – either DCFS or a Local Law Enforcement Agency. Generally, reports are filed with the DCFS if they involve allegations of abuse or neglect by an in-home perpetrator. Generally, reports are filed with a Local Law Enforcement Agency if they involve allegations of abuse by a District employee or an out-of-home perpetrator or allegations of moderate to severe abuse by an in-home perpetrator.

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## Legal Response

This conduct is sufficient for you to form a reasonable suspicion that child abuse has occurred. Accordingly, a SCAR must be filed with a CPA.

### Other Considerations

Whether you have reasonable suspicion that child abuse occurred, there is sufficient information to determine that improper conduct may have occurred (e.g., LAUSD Code of Conduct), including sexual harassment. You should notify an administrator of the possible inappropriate conduct.

The administrator should then notify the Local District (LD) Operations Coordinator. The LD Administrator of Operations must exercise discretion as to whether the employee should be removed from the school site or work assignment (BUL- 6532.1, Protocols and Procedures to Report, Reassign and Investigate Allegations of Employee Misconduct).

The site administrator/division supervisor will inform the Local District/Division of law enforcement's determination as to whether the District may proceed with or should refrain from conducting an administrative investigation. Once clearance has been obtained from the Local Law Enforcement Agency, the administrative investigation shall proceed. Upon conclusion of the investigation, appropriate administrative action will be taken, if warranted.

Parents/guardians of all parties involved should be notified at the appropriate time, pending any law enforcement investigation.

## Emotional Support

### Listen

Hearing about an employee treating a student this way may elicit a strong emotional response. Validate Tasha's concerns. Listen carefully, pay attention, and convey your concern and interest in Tasha's well-being, thereby helping her to feel safe. You may want to take notes to help with remembering details to be included in the SCAR.

### Protect

Act immediately by following the legal response. Let the student know that you take her seriously. Doing so is the best way to protect students and promote a safe learning environment.

### Connect

Convey concern for Tasha's well-being. Every school site has protocols, systems, and resources to support and address student safety and well-being. This is an opportunity to become familiar with and use the procedures, policies, and resources at your work site.

### Model

Maintain a professional and calm level of emotions and reactions. Do not express shock or anger at the possible perpetrator or event.

### Teach

Help her to understand that it is normal to have a confusing range of feelings as a result of experiences like these. Remind Tasha that she did the right thing by reporting her concerns. As a result, she is not only taking care of herself but helping her peers as well. Teaching students to seek help and identify who they can go to for support at home and school is important.

