



Division of District Operations

Breaking the Silence

Child Abuse Awareness Training

Graphic Internet Access



The Scenario

An elementary school student brags to the entire class that he surfs the web at home late at night and visits any website he wants. He claims that he has seen “everything!” 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 the student? To you? To your school? To LAUSD?

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

Away from other students, you may ask the student clarifying questions such as, “What time do you go to sleep? When do you surf the web? What do you mean by ‘everything’?” It appears that the student’s parents may not be exercising appropriate supervision and that the student is being allowed to view websites that are not age appropriate.

The student’s initial and subsequent comments may or may not necessitate the filing of a SCAR. Accordingly, if you do not have reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect, you may document the comment, make an inquiry with the student’s parent/guardian, and monitor the student’s behavior. If there are other related comments or incidents in the future that lead you to believe that this student is being neglected, a SCAR should be filed with a CPA.

Emotional Support

Listen

Convey your interest and concern for the student’s well-being. You may want to take notes to help with remembering details for documentation purposes and/or to be included in the SCAR.

Protect

Protecting students includes providing them with consistency, supervision and clear rules and expectations. If a SCAR is not filed, it will be important to speak with the student’s parent/guardian and convey your concern for his potential exposure to inappropriate content and unlimited access to the Internet. Expressing the importance of coming to school ready to learn by getting enough sleep may also be indicated.

Connect

The parent/guardian may express concerns or a need for additional community or school resources to assist them with the social-emotional well-being of their child. 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

Model appropriate use of the Internet and ways it can be helpful to academic learning. Maintain a professional and calm level of emotions and reactions to help them achieve balance and restore a calm environment. Do not express shock, anger or disbelief at the possible perpetrator or event.

Teach

This is an opportunity to discuss internet safety with the student, his family and the entire class. Additionally, teach students and provide information to parents about healthy habits, regarding eating and sleeping well, as this enhances the ability of the student coming to school ready to learn.

