

Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Prevention

Purpose

This policy has been instituted to ensure that Valley School District employees are aware of the signs of child abuse, neglect and exploitation and their duty to report any suspected incidences of child maltreatment.

Scope

This policy applies to the Superintendent, district employees, students, parents or guardians, and the community.

Policy

1. Because child abuse, neglect and exploitation are a violation of children's human rights and an obstacle to their educational development, the Board directs that staff will be alert for any evidence of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.
2. For purposes of this policy, the term “child” means anyone under the age of eighteen (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.
3. “Child abuse, neglect or exploitation” means:
 - (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.
 - Intentionally contacting, 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.
 - 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. These acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain or mental suffering.
 - (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.

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- (g) Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in 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.
4. 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.
 5. 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.
 - 5.1. Children (including other students), family members, and any other adult can engage in child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Such incidents may include student-on-student misconduct. Staff should report all incidents of abuse regardless of the age of the person who engages in it.
 - 5.2. Subject to the definition in section 3, staff should not focus on a person's mental status to determine if he/she has committed child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The law governing mandated reporting does not allow for exceptions for people with medical conditions that may mitigate the intent for committing child abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
 6. The Superintendent will develop reporting procedures and provide them to all staff on an annual basis. The purpose is to identify and report in a timely manner all evidence of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the proper authorities. Staff will receive training regarding reporting obligations during their initial orientation and every three years after initial employment.
 7. When feasible, the district will provide community education programs for prospective parents, foster parents, and adoptive parents on parenting skills, on the problems of child abuse, and methods to avoid child abuse situations. The district will also encourage staff to participate in in-service programs that address the issues surrounding child abuse. By including within the district's curriculum concepts on self-worth and self-esteem for students, the district will be creating an educational environment that will be receptive to the recognition and amelioration of child abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Related Procedures

3421P1-Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Prevention

5253P1-Maintaining Professional Staff-Student Boundaries

Policy Cross References

4311-District Relationships With Law Enforcement and Other Governmental Agencies

5253-Maintaining Professional Staff-Student Boundaries

Policy Legal References

RCW 13.34.300 – Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend school as evidence to neglect petition

RCW 26.44.020 – Definitions

RCW 26.44.030 – Reports — Duty and authority to make — Duty of receiving agency — Duty to notify — Case planning and consultation — Penalty for unauthorized exchange of information — Filing dependency petitions — Investigations — Interviews of children — Records — Risk assessment process

RCW 28A.320.160 – Alleged sexual misconduct by school employee — Parental notification — Information on public records act

RCW 28A.400.317 – Physical abuse or sexual misconduct by school employees — Duty to report — Training

RCW 28A.620.010 – Purposes

RCW28A.620.020 – Restrictions — Classes on parenting skills and child abuse prevention encouraged

RCW 43.43.830 – Background checks — Access to children or vulnerable persons - Definitions

WAC 388-15-009 – What is child abuse or neglect?

AGO 1987, No. 9 – Children — Child Abuse — Reporting by School Officials — Alleged Abuse by Student

Management Resources

Policy & Legal News, June 2015 – Child abuse prevention policy reinforced

Policy News, April 2010 – Child abuse interviews at school

Policy News, February 2007 – Physical Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Notice Requirements

Policy News, June 1999 – 23% of districts out-of-compliance on child abuse policies

Policy History

Action:	Date:
Approved by the Board	Unknown
Revised	November 18, 2015
Revised	
Revised	

Previous Policy Number: 11005