



Breaking the Silence

Child Abuse Awareness Training

Bullies



The Scenario

Pete, a second grade student, has come to school without his meal ticket for three days in a row. You call his mother, who says that she pins the meal ticket to his shirt every day before he leaves for school. You talk with Pete who reports that a group of boys takes the meal ticket from him on the way to school. Pete refuses to identify them because they threatened to beat him up if he told. What do you do?

Discussion Begins

What do you do?

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

If you report and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) 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

This is a peer versus peer student incident. It may not meet the eligibility of child abuse. This incident may possibly be identified as bullying. Refer to BUL-5212.2 Bullying and Hazing Policy (Student-to-Student and Student-to-Adult).

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

If the clarifying response from the child gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of abuse, a SCAR must be filed with a CPA.

Other Considerations

You should notify an administrator of the situation. The administrator may notify the Local District Operations Coordinator for further guidance.

This conduct may constitute bullying. It is important to know if there are other students being bullied and also to determine the identity of the bullies and whether they attend your school. Since you notified the administrator, he/she must in turn follow the procedures outlined in the Bullying and Hazing Policy (BUL-5212.2). Staff from the Office of Human Relations, Diversity and Equity may provide consultation.

Emotional Support

Listen

Listen carefully, pay attention, and convey your concern and interest in Pete's well-being. Ask open-ended questions, as needed, to engage him and help him feel safe. If you determine the identity of the group of boys, meet with them to discuss that such behavior would be considered bullying.

Protect

The situation must be addressed by following the legal response and other considerations. Doing so is the best way to protect students and promote a safe learning environment.

Connect

Communicate with the students' teacher(s) and parents/ guardians regarding this situation. 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. By intervening, you are promoting a safe environment.

Teach

Talk with Pete about the fact that no one has the right to steal from him. Help him to understand that it is normal to have a confusing range of feelings as a result of experiences like these.

