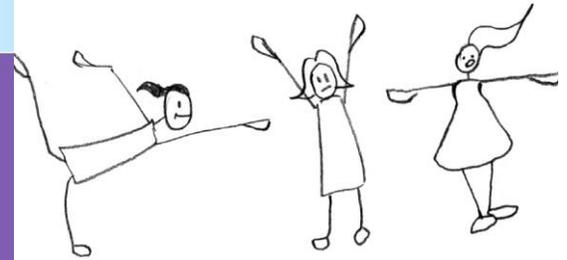




Breaking the Silence Child Abuse Awareness Training

Student Doodles



The Scenario

A piece of paper drops out of a student’s notebook. As you pick it up to return it to the student, you notice explicit drawings depicting various sexual positions. What do you do?

Discussion Begins

Does the age, grade level, or gender of the student change your decision about what to do? What other factors might be considered? If so, how?

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 other students? To you? To your school? To LAUSD? Is there more than one victim here?

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

Age, grade level and gender may be factors to consider in this scenario.

If based upon the initial student's statements, you do not have reasonable suspicion of child abuse, you may ask him/her clarifying questions regarding the note such as, "Who drew the picture? Tell me about the pictures." If there is reasonable suspicion that child abuse occurred, a SCAR must be filed with a CPA.

Other Considerations

If the pictures are being shared among students, it may also constitute sexual harassment. Sexual harassment only applies to grades 4-12. Accordingly, notify an administrator and the Title IX Complaint Manager. Follow the steps in the Title IX Policy/Complaint Procedures (BUL-2521.1) and Sexual Harassment Policy (BUL-3349.1).

Notwithstanding whether sexual harassment exists, the administrator and Title IX Complaint Manager must take steps to ensure that any inappropriate behavior ceases. The Educational Equity Compliance Office may provide resources and consultation in the area of sexual harassment for both students and staff.

The administrator should consult with the Student Discipline and Expulsion Support Unit, if appropriate.

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

Emotional Support

Listen

The images in the notebook may elicit a strong emotional reaction. It is important to listen carefully and ask clarifying questions. Taking notes might be helpful with remembering the details to be included in the SCAR.

Protect

Protecting students includes ensuring the removal of all drawings and other inappropriate materials that may be shared among students and classmates. Speaking with the student's parent/ guardian and conveying your concern for his/her potential exposure to inappropriate sexual content might be indicated. The situation must be addressed by following the mandated child abuse reporting procedures. This is the best way to protect students and promote a safe learning environment.

Connect

Facilitate contact between the student and the support staff, such as a referral to Psychiatric Social Workers, Pupil Services and Attendance Counselors or School Psychologists, as necessary. There may be other resources and/or services for the student(s) that may support and address the student's recovery, safety and well-being.

Model

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

Inform the student and the parent/guardian that doodles such as these will arouse concern among staff and disrupt the classroom learning environment. Help the student find alternate ways of being expressive. This may also be an opportunity to emphasize to students the importance of maintaining a safe and healthy school environment where individual and student's rights are protected, so learning takes place.

