

Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Prevention

Child abuse, neglect, and exploitation are violations of children's human rights and an obstacle to their educational development. The board directs that to be alert for any evidence of such abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

For purposes of this policy, the term “child” means anyone under the age of 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.

“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. It also includes, 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. This includes 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;
- G. Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child; or
- H. Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of the preceding actions.

Child abuse can include abuse by another minor and may be included in incidents of student misconduct.

Children (including other students), family members, and any other adult can engage in child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This may include incidents of student on student misconduct. Staff should report all incidents of abuse regardless of the age of the person who engages in it.

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Subject to the definition above, staff should not focus on a person’s mental status to determine if she or he has committed child abuse, neglect or exploitation.

When feasible, the district may provide community education programs for prospective parents, foster parents, and adoptive parents on parenting skills and 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.

The superintendent will develop reporting procedures and provide them to all staff on annual basis. The purpose is to identify and timely all evidence of child abuse, neglect or exploitation to the proper authorities. Staff will receive training regarding reporting obligations during their initial orientation and annually after initial employment.

All staff are responsible for reporting all suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation to the proper authorities and/or 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 is provable in a subsequent legal proceeding. 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.

Cross References:	Board Policy 4265	Community Schools
	Board Policy 4310	Relations with the Law Enforcement, Child Protective Agencies and the County Health Department
Legal References:	RCW 13.34.300	Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend school as evidence to neglect petition
	RCW 26.44.020	Child abuse — 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

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RCW 28A.400.317	Physical abuse or sexual misconduct by school employees — Duty to Report — Training
RCW 28A.620.010	Community education provisions — Purposes
RCW 28A.620.020	Community education provisions — Restrictions Classes on parenting skills and child abuse prevention encouraged
RCW 43.43.830	Background checks — Access to children or vulnerable persons
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

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Priority