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Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Prevention

Because child abuse, and neglect and exploitation are violations of children's human rights and an obstacle to their educational development, the Board directs that certificated or classified school district employees (staff) shall be alert for any evidence of such abuse, or 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 any other person classified as a student in the district's database. "Child abuse, neglect, or exploitation" shall mean:

- 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 also 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.

Staff must report all incidents of abuse, neglect and exploitation to law enforcement regardless of the age of the person who engages in it. This includes minors (including incidents of student on student misconduct), family members, and any other adult who engages in child abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

When feasible, the district will provide community education programs for prospective parents/guardians, foster parents, and adoptive parents on parenting skills and on the problems of child abuse and methods to avoid child abuse, neglect and exploitation situations. The district shall also encourage staff to participate in inservice programs that deal with the issues surrounding child abuse, neglect and exploitation.

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Child Abuse, and Neglect and Exploitation Prevention (continued)

The superintendent shall develop reporting procedures and shall disseminate the procedures to all staff. The purpose is to identify and report as soon as possible to the proper authorities all evidence of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

A staff member who has knowledge or reasonable cause to believe that a student has been a victim of physical abuse or sexual misconduct by another student or school employee, shall report such abuse or misconduct to the appropriate school administrator. The school administrator shall cause a report to be made to the proper law enforcement agency if he or she has reasonable cause to believe that the misconduct or abuse has occurred as required under RCW 26.44.030. During the process of making a reasonable cause determination, the school administrator shall contact all parties involved in the complaint.

Staff shall receive training regarding their reporting obligations under state law in their orientation training when hired and then every three years thereafter.

Staff are legally responsible for reporting all suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation to law enforcement. For that reason, under state law, staff are free from liability for reporting instances of abuse, neglect or exploitation and are criminally liable for failure to do so.

Staff need not verify that a child has in fact been abused, neglected, or exploited. Any conditions or information that may reasonably be related to abuse, neglect, or exploitation should be reported. Legal authorities have the responsibility for investigating each case and taking such action as appropriate under the circumstances.

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¹ Cross reference:	Policy 4411	Relations with Law Enforcement and Child Protective Agencies
Legal reference:	RCW 13.34.300	Failure to cause juvenile to attend school as evidence under neglect petition
	26.44.020	Child abuse--Definitions
	26.44.030	Reports--duty and authority to make--Duty of receiving agency
	28A.620.010	Central registry of reported cases of child abuse
	28A.620.020	Community education provisions--Purposes
	28A.620.030	Community education provisions--Restrictions
	43.43.830(6)	Background checks--Access to children or vulnerable persons
	28A.400.317	Physical abuse or sexual misconduct by school employees--Duty to Report-Training

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