

Section: **STUDENTS**

Policy Title: **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 staff shall 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 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 ~~injury to, or creating~~ 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.

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.

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. 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.

When feasible, the district will provide community education programs for prospective parents, foster parent, 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 an annual basis. The purpose is to identify and timely report 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.

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.

Staff need not verify a report that a child has been abused, neglected, or exploited. Any conditions or information that may be reasonably be 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 4310	Relations with the Law Enforcement and Child Protective Agencies
	Policy 3226	Interviews and Interrogations of Students on School Premises
Legal References:	RCW 13.34.300	Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend evidence under neglect petition
	26.44.020	Definitions
	26.44.030	Report – Duty and authority to make – Duty of receiving agency – Duty to notify – Case planning and consultation – Penalty for

Policy 3421

unauthorized exchange of information – Filing
dependency petitions – Investigations –
Interviews of children – Records – Risk
assessment process

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

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

28A.620.010 Purposes

28A.620.020 Restrictions – Classes on parenting skills and
child abuse prevention encouraged

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:

2015 – June Issue

2010 – April Issue

Policy News, February 2007

Policy News, June 1999

Physical Abuse and Sexual
Misconduct Notice Requirements

23% of districts out-of-compliance on
child abuse policies

Adopted: May 8, 2006

Revised: November 21, 2016