Child Abuse and Prevention Policy (PESD 208)

Definitions

Child abuse or neglect includes the following: (Penal Code 11165.5,11165.6)

1. A physical injury or death inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person
2. Sexual abuse of a child, including sexual assault or sexual exploitation, as defined in Penal Code 11165.1
3. Neglect of a child as defined in Penal Code 11165.2
4. Willful harming or injuring of a child or the endangering of the person or health of a child as defined in Penal Code 11165.3
5. Unlawful corporal punishment or injury as defined in Penal Code 11165.4

Child abuse or neglect does not include:

1. A mutual affray between minors (Penal Code 11165.6)
2. An injury caused by reasonable and necessary force used by a peace officer acting within the course and scope of his/her employment (Penal Code 11165.6)
3. An injury resulting from the exercise by a teacher, vice principal, principal, or other certificated employee of the same degree of physical control over a student that a parent/guardian would be privileged to exercise, not exceeding the amount of physical control reasonably necessary to maintain order, protect property, protect the health and safety of students, or maintain proper and appropriate conditions conducive to learning (Education Code 44807)
4. An injury caused by a school employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to persons or damage to property, to protect himself/herself, or to obtain weapons or other dangerous objects within the control of a student (Education Code 49001)
5. Physical pain or discomfort caused by athletic competition or other such recreational activity voluntarily engaged in by a student (Education Code 49001)
6. Homelessness or classification as an unaccompanied minor (Penal Code 11165.15)

Mandated reporters include, but are not limited to, teachers; instructional aides; teacher's aides or assistants; classified employees; certificated pupil personnel employees; administrative officers or supervisors of child attendance; athletic coaches, administrators, and directors; administrators and employees of a licensed child day care facility; Head Start teachers; district police or security officers; licensed nurses or health care providers; and administrators, presenters, and counselors of a child abuse prevention program. (Penal Code 11165.7)

Reasonable suspicion means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing when appropriate on his/her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect. However, reasonable suspicion does not require certainty that child abuse or neglect has occurred nor does it require a specific medical indication of child abuse or neglect. (Penal Code 11166)

Reportable Offenses

A mandated reporter shall make a report using the procedures provided below whenever, in his/her professional capacity or within the scope of his/her employment, he/she has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect. (Penal Code 11166)

Any mandated reporter who has knowledge of or who reasonably suspects that a child is suffering serious emotional damage or is at a substantial risk of suffering serious emotional damage, based on evidence of severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or untoward aggressive behavior toward self or others, may make a report to the appropriate agency. (Penal Code 11166.05,11167)

Any district employee who reasonably believes that he/she has observed the commission of a murder, rape, or lewd or lascivious act by use of force, violence, duress, menace, or fear of immediate and unlawful bodily injury against a victim who is a child under age 14 shall notify a peace officer. (Penal Code 152.3, 288)

Responsibility for Reporting

The reporting duties of mandated reporters are individual and cannot be delegated to another person. (Penal Code 11166)

When two or more mandated reporters jointly have knowledge of a known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect, the report may be made by a member of the team selected by mutual agreement and a single report may be made and signed by the selected member of the reporting team. Any member who has knowledge that the member designated to report has failed to do so shall thereafter make the report. (Penal Code 11166)

No supervisor or administrator shall impede or inhibit a mandated reporter from making a report. (Penal Code 11166)

Any person not identified as a mandated reporter who has knowledge of or observes a child whom he/she knows or reasonably suspects has been a victim of child abuse or neglect may report the known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate agency. (Penal Code 11166)

Reporting Procedures

1. Initial Telephone Report

Immediately or as soon as practicable after knowing or observing suspected child abuse or neglect, a mandated reporter shall make an initial report by telephone to any police department (excluding a school district police/security department), sheriff's department, county probation department if designated by the county to receive such reports, or county welfare department. (Penal Code 11165.9,11166)

2. Written Report

Within 36 hours of knowing or observing the information concerning the incident, the mandated reporter shall then prepare and either send, fax, or electronically submit to the appropriate agency a written follow-up report, which includes a completed Department of Justice form (SS 8572). (Penal Code 11166,11168)

Penal Code 11167 requires the mandated reporter to give his/her name when reporting known or suspected child abuse. However, the reporter's name and the report are confidential and are only disclosed in limited circumstances provided by law.

Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect shall include, if known: (Penal Code 11167)

a. The name, business address, and telephone number of the person making the report and the capacity

that makes the person a mandated reporter

b. The child's name and address, present location, and, where applicable, school, grade, and class

c. The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the child's parents/guardians

d. The name, address, telephone number, and other relevant personal information about the person who might have abused or neglected the child

e. The information that gave rise to the reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect and the source(s) of that information

The mandated reporter shall make a report even if some of this information is not known or is uncertain to him/her. (Penal Code 11167)

The mandated reporter may give to an investigator from an agency investigating the case, including a licensing agency, any information relevant to an incident of child abuse or neglect or to a report made for serious emotional damage pursuant to Penal Code 11166.05. (Penal Code 11167)

3. Internal Reporting

The mandated reporter shall not be required to disclose his/her identity to his/her supervisor, the principal, or the Superintendent or designee. (Penal Code 11166)

However, employees reporting child abuse or neglect to an appropriate agency are encouraged, but not required, to notify the Superintendent/Principal as soon as possible after the initial telephone report to the appropriate agency. When so notified, the principal shall inform the Superintendent or designee.

The principal so notified shall provide the mandated reporter with any assistance necessary to ensure that reporting procedures are carried out in accordance with law, Board policy, and administrative regulation. At the mandated reporter's request, the principal may assist in completing and filing the necessary forms.

Reporting the information to an employer, supervisor, principal, school counselor, co-worker, or other person shall not be a substitute for making a mandated report to the appropriate agency. (Penal Code 11166)

Training

Within the first six weeks of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall provide training on mandated reporting requirements to district employees and persons working on their behalf who are mandated reporters. Any school personnel hired during the school year shall receive such training within the first six weeks of employment. (Education Code 44691; Penal Code 11165.7)

Education Code 44691 requires school districts to use the online training module provided by the California Department of Social Services. However, if the online training module is not used, the Superintendent or designee is required to report to the CDE regarding the training being used in its place.

The training shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, training in identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect. In addition, the training shall include information that failure to report an incident of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect as required by law is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment and/or a fine as specified. (Education Code 44691; Penal Code 11165.7)

The Superintendent or designee shall obtain and retain proof of each mandated reporter's completion of the training. (Education Code 44691)

Victim Interviews by Social Services

Whenever the Department of Social Services or another government agency is investigating suspected child abuse or neglect that occurred within the child's home or out-of-home care facility, the student may be interviewed by an agency representative during school hours, on school premises. The Superintendent or designee shall give the student the choice of being interviewed in private or in the presence of any adult school employee or volunteer aide selected by the student. (Penal Code 11174.3)

A staff member or volunteer aide selected by a child may decline to be present at the interview. If the selected person accepts, the principal or designee shall inform him/her of the following requirements: (Penal Code 11174.3)

1. The purpose of the selected person's presence at the interview is to lend support to the child and enable him/her to be as comfortable as possible.

2. The selected person shall not participate in the interview.

3. The selected person shall not discuss the facts or circumstances of the case with the child.

4. The selected person is subject to the confidentiality requirements of the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, a violation of which is punishable as specified in Penal Code 11167.5.

If a staff member agrees to be present, the interview shall be held at a time during school hours when it does not involve an expense to the school. (Penal Code 11174.3)

Release of Child to Peace Officer

When a child is released to a peace officer and taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse or neglect, the Superintendent or designee and/or principal shall not notify the parent/guardian, but rather shall provide the peace officer with the address and telephone number of the child's parent/guardian. (Education Code 48906)

Parent/Guardian Complaints

Upon request, the Superintendent or designee shall provide parents/guardians with procedures for reporting suspected child abuse occurring at a school site to appropriate agencies. For parents/guardians whose primary language is not English, such procedures shall be in their primary language and, when communicating orally regarding those procedures, an interpreter shall be provided.

To file a complaint against a district employee or other person suspected of child abuse or neglect at a school site, parents/guardians may file a report by telephone, in person, or in writing with any appropriate agency identified above under "Reporting Procedures." If a parent/guardian makes a complaint about an employee to any other employee, the employee receiving the information shall notify the parent/guardian of procedures for filing a complaint with the appropriate agency. The employee also is obligated pursuant to Penal Code 11166 to file a report himself/herself using the procedures described above for mandated reporters.

In addition, if the child is enrolled in special education, a separate complaint may be filed with the California Department of Education pursuant to 5 CCR 4650.

Notifications

The Superintendent or designee shall provide to all new employees who are mandated reporters a statement that informs them of their status as mandated reporters, their reporting obligations under Penal Code 11166, and their confidentiality rights under Penal Code 11167. The district also shall provide these new employees with a copy of Penal Code 11165.7,11166, and 11167. (Penal Code 11165.7,11166.5)

Before beginning employment, any person who will be a mandated reporter by virtue of his/her position shall sign a statement indicating that he/she has knowledge of the reporting obligations under Penal Code 11166 and will comply with those provisions. The signed statement shall be retained by the Superintendent or designee. (Penal Code 11166.5)