



Breaking the Silence Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Training Scenario 2-Response

Drama Rehearsal (Secondary)

Initial Actions

The safety and well-being of every student must be the first and foremost priority for all educators. Immediate action should be taken to bring the matter to the attention of the site administrator to protect any student from any situation which threatens the student's safety or well-being. For example, the school may initiate employee consequences, class changes, student safety plans, etc.

This scenario may not involve "grooming" or adult sexual misconduct, but it may involve Code of Conduct with Students violation. Accordingly, a SCAR may be filed with a CPA. Also, since the allegations involve suspected abuse by an employee, these SCAR reports are generally filed with local law enforcement.

Considerations

1. CODE OF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS

This scenario may be an example of a Code of Conduct with Students violation regardless of gender or job title. The *Code of Conduct with Students*, BUL-5167.0, states that it is inappropriate to meet individually with a student behind closed doors, regardless of gender. In this case, it is unknown whether they are meeting behind closed doors. Also, this policy guides against remaining on campus with student(s) after the last administrator leaves the school site. This case, however, may fall under an exception such as teachers rehearsing with students for a drama activity with prior approval from an administrator. Further, the teacher has spent special attention on one student, which can give an impression of inequity or preferential treatment. Additionally, the teacher should maintain clear boundaries with the student and discussions should be within the scope of the teacher's duties. In sum, the teacher should be cautioned to avoid situations of possible or perceived inappropriate conduct.

Also, the law and District policy prohibit Ms. B from privately tutoring Anabel after school or any other time for pay. Pursuant to the law and the District's *Employee Code of Ethics*, this is a conflict of interest because the employee is using her position for financial benefit or improper advantage. Also, this situation is prohibited for other reasons such as the tutored student may be perceived by non-tutored students and their parents as having a unique and advantageous relationship with the teacher and the school.

Though conduct of this nature may be seemingly innocuous on its face, it can, in some cases, also be considered a form of boundary invasion that some adults use to get closer to young persons, build trust, and potentially engage in other increasingly more inappropriate boundary invasions leading up to and including sexual misconduct. If left unaddressed, this behavior could escalate and even result in reasonable suspicion of child abuse and discipline for the employee. In general, when allegations of inappropriate conduct or behavior are made, the relevant District administrator is obligated to:

- (1) Stop the misconduct, if any;
- (2) Investigate the misconduct, if any; and
- (3) Take appropriate administrative and/or disciplinary action, if warranted.

In general, if you have reasonable suspicion of child abuse based on the scenario, you must file a SCAR without further questioning. If you, however, do not have reasonable suspicion of child abuse you may ask clarifying questions to determine whether or not suspected abuse exists. Thus, you may ask clarifying questions of the student or colleague if the information provided raises any concerns for you. Depending on the context and any additional overtures that may become known or suspected, you may develop concerns about possible

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Scenario 2-Response

other violations leading to suspicion of child abuse and required mandated reporting.

2. GROOMING OR ADULT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

As described above, this inappropriate conduct violates the Code of Conduct with Students policy, and any private tutoring for a fee is a conflict of interest and violates the law and the District policy. Also, in some circumstances, the above conduct may rise to the level of suspected child abuse. For example, in an attempt to gain trust and confidence, a perpetrator may engage in “grooming” or adult sexual misconduct, that is, physical or non-physical activity directed to the student, the student’s parents, or other adults with the purpose of developing a sexual or romantic relationship with the minor.

Grooming activities vary but generally methodically increase over time and allow a groomer to test their targets as to gauging acceptance and silence at each step. Children who are victims of adult misconduct may feel conflicted about the situation, especially if people they trust, such as school staff or other adults working with students (teacher/volunteer/classroom assistant/employee of school), are implicated.

Grooming activities may be done privately or publicly and gradually progress to sexualized behaviors. Signs that may signify grooming include but are not limited to:

- (1) Touching that is intimate or sexual in nature;
- (2) Personal or social media interaction with a student without others’ knowledge or supervision;
- (3) Meeting a student away from school grounds or hours;
- (4) Giving gifts or spending extra time with a student in nonsexual ways; and
- (5) Sexual or personal oral or written comments made to a student.

Also, adults who engage in grooming may exhibit some of the following behaviors: Testing boundaries of students to determine whom to target or who is a vulnerable student; trying to build a more personal relationship with the student, such as telling the student personal stories and involving student personal matters (e.g., favors/errands); discouraging the student from sharing with others; acting in a manner to manipulate student’s affection; engaging in intimidation and threats to silence and isolate a student.

Based on the above, an employee with reasonable suspicion of child abuse must file a SCAR without further questioning. Also, pursuant to District policy, an employee must inform their site administrator of these allegations of inappropriate conduct because the District administrator is obligated to:

- (1) Stop the misconduct, if any;
- (2) Investigate the misconduct, if any; and
- (3) Take appropriate administrative and/or disciplinary action, if warranted.

In general, if you, however, do not have reasonable suspicion of child abuse you may ask clarifying questions to determine whether or not suspected abuse exists. Also, if based upon the initial information you receive, you do not have reasonable suspicion of child abuse, you may call and consult with the CPA and inform your site administrator of the inappropriate employee (or adult working with student) conduct. Although some grooming types of conduct may not be criminal, it often violates other laws and professional codes of conduct in the educational setting.