

Breaking the Silence  
Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Training  
Scenario 3

**Communication Boundaries (Secondary)**

*A parent calls you because she found text messages on her daughter's cell phone and is concerned about her daughter's very personal relationship with Ms. V, who is an experienced teacher and is well-liked by students. She frequently offers students extra help after school, so it's not unusual to see students visiting her classroom after school. Sometimes she even treats them to snacks or trinkets. She has tutored this parent's child in a variety of subjects over a two-year period. During that time, Ms. V sent emails and text messages to the student using her cell phone. At first, the exchanges were general – sometimes unrelated to schoolwork (e.g., asking about a family member, or how friendships were going). Recently, the student began to text Ms. V about more personal feelings and relationships. In response, Ms. V shares her own experience regarding love, affection, and relationships gone wrong, and offers relationship advice to the student.*

**Discussion Questions**

1. What immediate action would you take?
2. Is this information enough for reasonable suspicion of child abuse? If not, do you need to see the actual messages to have reasonable suspicion? What about to make a child abuse report?
3. How could or how does this situation become a violation of law or District policy?

**Keep in Mind**

**District Policy**

All employees with reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect *must* report the suspected abuse or neglect to a Child Protective Agency (CPA) pursuant to the *Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Requirements* bulletin.

**Reasonable Suspicion Definition**

Reasonable suspicion means it is reasonable for a person, based on the person's training, education, and experience, to entertain a suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

**Clarifying Questions**

An employee who does not have reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect may ask clarifying questions to determine whether or not suspected abuse or neglect exists. If an employee, however, does have reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect, the employee *must* file a SCAR without further questioning. Also, an employee with reasonable suspicion *must* file SCAR even if the CPA states "handle it administratively."

**Required Steps for Filing a SCAR**

Filing a SCAR consists of two steps:

- (1) Telephone call *must* be made immediately, or as soon as practically possible to a CPA; and
- (2) Written report *must* be filed with a CPA within 36 hours of receiving the information. The CPA will either be the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) or the local law enforcement. Generally, SCARs are filed with DCFS if the alleged perpetrator is in the home, and if the allegations involve an out-of-home perpetrator (e.g., employee), the SCARs are filed with local law enforcement (e.g., LAPD).