

# A Child's Accusation

## The Scenario:

A student tells you that his teacher, Ms. Harrison, hits him and other students when she gets angry. He insists that it is true and shows you a bruise on his arm to prove it. You know that Ms. Harrison is often impatient and frustrated with her students, but you don't believe she would ever hurt a child. What do you do?

## Discussion Begins

## What do you do?

**Do you report?** If so, to whom? If so, when? Is there more than one victim here? If so, do you make one, two, or multiple reports? If you don't, what might happen to the student? To other students? To the teacher? To you? To your school? To LAUSD?

If you report and the Local Law Enforcement Agency or the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) tells you...

...to **handle it administratively**, what do you do next?

...**they will investigate**, what do you do next?



## Legal Response

If there is reasonable suspicion that child abuse occurred, a Suspected Child Abuse Report must be filed with either the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or the Local Law Enforcement Agency.

You should also attempt to get the names of other potential victims and file reports relating to them once they are identified.

### Other Considerations

Additionally, you should notify an administrator of the inappropriate conduct. The administrator should then notify the Local District Operations Coordinator. At this time, the Local District Superintendent or Unit/Division Head must exercise discretion as to whether the employee should be removed from the school site or work assignment.

As appropriate, the Local District Operations Coordinators and/or Division of Human Resources Representatives shall consult with Employee Relations and communicate with the Local Law Enforcement Agency to determine whether they may begin an administrative investigation. Once clearance has been obtained from the Local Law Enforcement Agency, the administrative investigation shall proceed. Upon conclusion of the investigation, appropriate administrative action should be taken, if warranted.

### Listen

Although it may be difficult to hear about a colleague maltreating a student, listen carefully, pay attention, and convey your concern and interest in his well-being. Ask open-ended questions as needed to engage him and help him feel safe.

### Protect

The situation must be addressed by following the legal response. Doing so is the best way to protect students and promote a safe learning environment.

### Connect

Convey your concern for the student's well-being. Every school site has protocols, systems, and resources to support and address student safety and well-being. This is an opportunity to become familiar with and use the procedures, policies, and resources at your work site.

### Model

Maintain a professional and calm level of emotions and reactions. Do not express shock or anger at the possible perpetrator or event.

### Teach

Talk with the student about the fact that no one has the right to hurt him. Help him to understand that it is normal to have a confusing range of feelings as a result of experiences like these.

## Emotional Support