

A Parent's Suspicion

The Scenario:

A parent tells you that she is concerned that her daughter, Rachel, is spending too much time with a certain male teacher. One day after school, when the daughter did not show up at the scheduled pick-up time, the parent went to the teacher's room in an attempt to locate her daughter. Finding a locked door, the parent knocked for a long time. When the teacher answered the door, the parent saw Rachel, whose clothes were disheveled, exiting through a back door. Rachel is adamant that nothing improper occurred. What do you do?

Discussion Begins

What do you do?

Do you report? If so, to whom? If so, when? If you don't, what might happen to Rachel? To other students? 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

At this time, there may not be enough facts to form reasonable suspicion of child abuse. However, 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.

Other Considerations

If you are told to **handle it administratively**, you should file the Suspected Child Abuse Report with the agency anyway and keep a copy along with the agent's name and ID number.

Whether or not you have reasonable suspicion that child abuse occurred, there may be sufficient information to determine that improper conduct has occurred (see the LAUSD Code of Conduct). 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 (BUL-3357.1).

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

It may be difficult to hear this parent's concern, and you may have a strong emotional reaction. Listen carefully, pay attention, and convey your concern and interest in Rachel's well-being.

Protect

Act immediately by following the legal response. Let the parent and student know that you take her disclosure seriously.

Connect

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

Take this opportunity to review the district policy regarding appropriate teacher/student boundaries. Refer to the LAUSD Code of Conduct.

Emotional Support