

A Volunteer's Concern

The Scenario:

A volunteer hall monitor, whose job it is to ensure students get to class on time, tells you that she has noticed one female student who remains in her classroom after all the other students have left. When the student exits the class, she appears nervous, fixes her dress or shirt and tries to avoid eye contact with the volunteer. When the volunteer inquired if the student was OK, the student stated that she was getting help on a project and needed to stay after class to work with her teacher. The volunteer is asking you if she should assume this is a regular school activity or whether there might be something else occurring. What do you do?

Discussion Begins

The Scenario Continues:

As the discussion with the volunteer continues, she mentions that she has noticed other female students staying after class for extended periods of time at other times throughout the day. Does this additional piece of information influence how you handle this situation? What do you do?

Discussion Continues

What do you do?

What do you tell the volunteer?

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

In these scenarios, you still may not have sufficient information to form a reasonable suspicion that child abuse is occurring. However, if you determine that there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, you must file a Suspected Child Abuse Report with either the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or the Local Law Enforcement Agency.

Other Considerations

Volunteers are not mandated reporters and are not required to file a Suspected Child Abuse Report. Here, she has correctly reported the information to a mandated reporter.

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 (see 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

Validate the volunteer's concerns. You may or may not have a strong emotional reaction (i.e., anger, sadness, guilt). However, listen to the volunteer to be able to recall the exact language used. You may want to take notes to help with remembering details.

Protect

Act immediately by following the legal response. Let the 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