

A Volunteer's Suspicion

The Scenario:

A school-based volunteer tells you that while working with a student, she noticed that his shoulders, neck, and arms were bruised. When she asked the student what happened, he told her that he fell down the stairs at his apartment. The volunteer is asking for your guidance. What do you do?

Discussion Begins

The Scenario Continues:

As the discussion with the volunteer continues, she mentions that the student has had various bruises for a long time. 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 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

Even without the additional information about long standing bruises, you may have reasonable suspicion that child abuse has occurred. For any bruise that raises suspicion (single or multiple), you must file a Suspected Child Abuse Report. Because of the visible injuries, you should file it with 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.

Listen

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

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. Encourage the volunteer to continue being a supportive presence in the student's life.

Connect

Convey 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

Inform the volunteer that, by reporting her concern, she acted in the best interests of the child.

Emotional Support