

# Dropsy

## The Scenario:

Tasha tells you that, over the last few weeks, Mr. Sweeney has accidentally dropped several objects (paper clips, erasers, etc.) into her lap and reaches in to get them. She says that his hand seems to linger a bit and makes her feel uncomfortable. She tells you that she has seen him do it to other girls too. 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 Tasha? 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

This conduct may be sufficient for you to form a reasonable suspicion that child abuse has occurred. 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.

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

### Other Considerations

Whether or not you have reasonable suspicion that child abuse occurred, there may be sufficient information to determine that Sexual Harassment has occurred. Accordingly, you should notify an administrator and the Title IX Complaint Manager. Follow the steps in the Title IX Policy/Complaint Procedure Bulletin (BUL-2521.1) and Sexual Harassment Policy Bulletin (BUL-3349.0). Educational Equity can provide training in this area for both students and staff.

If you are an administrator, you 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 Tasha's concerns. Listen carefully, pay attention, and convey your concern and interest in Tasha's well-being, helping her to feel safe.

### 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

Help her to understand that it is normal to have a confusing range of feelings as a result of experiences like these.

## Emotional Support