

John & His Uncle

The Scenario:

In the last two or three days, John has been challenging directions, saying mean things to his peers, and displaying mood swings from being withdrawn to acting out. He is usually peaceful, happy-go-lucky, eager to participate in class, and very friendly with peers. His normal, high quality homework suddenly stopped. What do you do?

Discussion Begins

The Scenario Continues:

You ask John to talk with you at lunch. During the conversation, he tells you that his 30 year-old uncle has been talking to him about having sex with him. He says that he can't tell his dad because his uncle supports the family and his dad might hurt the uncle. What do you do?

Discussion Continues

What do you do?

Do you report? If so, to whom? If so, when? If you don't, what might happen to John? 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

The Scenario:

In this opening scenario, you do not have sufficient information to form a reasonable suspicion that child abuse has or is occurring. However, continue to observe John. Ask John if he is all right, or if everything is okay.

The Scenario Continues:

Once John has revealed the information about his uncle, there is no need to question John further. Immediately phone in a Suspected Child Abuse Report to the Local Law Enforcement Agency. Follow-up by filing a Suspected Child Abuse Report within 36 hours.

If the Local Law Enforcement Agency tells you to **handle it administratively**, you should file the report anyway. Fax a copy to the agency. Speak with the supervisor or person in charge of the child abuse reporting unit. You may contact another child protective services agency.

If the Local Law Enforcement Agency tells you that **they will investigate**, do not investigate.

Either way, keep a copy of the Suspected Child Abuse Report you filed along with the agent's name and ID.

Listen

It may be difficult to hear this disclosure and you may have a strong emotional reaction. 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

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

Connect

Convey your concern for the student's well-being by fulfilling your mandated reporting obligations. 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 John to understand that it is normal to have a confusing range of feelings as a result of what's happening.

Emotional Support