

# Senior Affairs

## The Scenario:

You hear rumors that Ms. Jung, an employee, is having an affair with a senior. What do you do?

## Discussion Begins

## The Scenario Continues:

The senior is 18 and about to graduate.

## Discussion Continues

## The Scenario Continues:

After graduation, the former senior and Ms. Jung get married.

## Discussion Continues

## What do you do?

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

Mandatory child abuse reporting is applicable to individuals under 18 years of age. If it turns out that Ms. Jung actually had a sexual relationship with the student when the student was 17 or younger (and Ms. Jung was over 21), this matter should be treated as potential child abuse and determine whether the student consented and how much older Ms. Jung is than the student (see BUL-1347.0 for guidance).

You 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

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 who 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.

The fact that Ms. Jung and the student were married after graduation only implies that there is a consensual relationship. Whether Ms. Jung engaged in inappropriate behavior before she got married depends on a number of factors: what relationship did Ms. Jung have with the student on campus? Did they come into contact with each other? Was Ms. Jung ever in a position of conflict of interest or bias? (e.g., was Ms. Jung the boy's cheerleading coach who had no contact at all with the student at school, or was she the student's teacher?) The particular facts will determine the extent of inappropriate conduct, if any, and the appropriate administrative action.

### Listen

All LAUSD employees have a responsibility to promote and maintain a safe learning environment. Note any details, that may or may not verify the rumor. This is either a case that needs to be reported, or one that will require an administrative response to protect both teacher and student.

### Protect

Inform the administration (see Listen). A word of caution - while it can be tempting to talk and gossip with co-workers about what has happened or what you have heard, it is not helpful to anyone. Do not allow rumors to be discussed in your classroom/presence.

### 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

Don't continue the rumor and monitor conversations that students may hear. Your students will be watching for both verbal and nonverbal cues.

### Teach

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

## Emotional Support