

Teacher Tantrum

The Scenario:

One day, Josie is sitting under a tree sobbing. She doesn't respond when you ask her what's wrong. John, another student in Josie's class, tells you that their teacher "went off" on Josie in front of everyone. 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 Josie? 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

Willful cruelty and a child's mental suffering constitute child abuse. You must consider whether the teacher's action creates a reasonable suspicion that child abuse has taken place. You may not conduct a child abuse investigation, but clarifying questions are appropriate. Ask John, "What do you mean by 'went off'?" If there is a 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.

Other Considerations

This conduct may violate the Board Resolution requiring respectful treatment of all persons on campus.

Whether or not you decide to file a Suspected Child Abuse Report, this situation must be brought to the attention of an administrator who, once notified, is obligated to take appropriate action to ensure that any inappropriate behavior ceases.

Listen

You may or may not have a strong emotional reaction (i.e., anger, sadness, guilt). However, you want to listen and support the student and convey a sense of caring.

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.

Connect

Ask if there is anything you can do to support both Josie and John (What would be most helpful right now?). 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

Encourage students to speak to trusted adults if they experience inappropriate interactions with adults or other students.

Emotional Support