

# Two Gay Dads

## The Scenario:

You overhear a teacher and a student, Janice, talking about Janice's two gay fathers. Janice is visibly upset. You hear the teacher tell Janice that her parents are going to Hell. 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 Janice? To Janice's relationship with her dads? 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/emotional maltreatment constitute child abuse. While it is unlikely, it is not impossible, that a single verbal interaction with a student could create a reasonable suspicion of child abuse. Accordingly, you must consider whether you have 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.

### Other Considerations

This conduct may constitute discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. As such, you should report the conduct to the 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.

Additionally, this conduct may also demonstrate inappropriate reference to topics of a religious nature which may constitute a violation of the constitutionally required separation of church and state.

### 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.

### 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. It is good to be aware of your thoughts and feelings and reactions about the event as they can affect your students. Your students will be watching you for both verbal and nonverbal cues and it will influence how your students cope and behave.

### Teach

Encourage students to speak to trusted adults if they experience inappropriate interaction with staff. Here, a discussion about tolerance of different lifestyles might be needed for staff and students in general. Educational Equity can provide training in this area for both students and staff.

## Emotional Support