

Child Abuse Prevention

“See something, say something”. This phrase originally became an unofficial slogan in response to terrorism, and now seems to be gaining new traction in the wake of the increase in school violence incidents. In fact, the meaning seems to have been expanded to include “read it, report it”, to emphasize the importance of reporting social media posts that are threatening in nature. Although the slogan has its roots from elsewhere, the meaning can be effectively applied to the prevention of child abuse and neglect.



It only takes a quick stroke of the keyboard in a search engine to locate many examples of child abuse and neglect occurring throughout the country. Although the number of incidents that occur at public agencies may not compare to other types of injurious categories, the toll of misconduct claims is staggering, not just monetarily and reputationally for the schools, but emotionally for the victims that can last a lifetime. The root cause of these incidents has expanded beyond male adults with female minors. The incidents are growing to include female adults with male minors and student-on-student. It is because of this that the responsibility to report suspicious behavior has now grown far beyond school administrators and teachers.

Everyone has the responsibility of a mandated reporter to report suspicious behavior and that includes empowering children.

What is suspicious behavior? Sometimes it is blatant – a hand placed on a knee, an arm placed across a shoulder, or a meeting behind a closed door. Our society today cannot afford to brush off such actions as innocent. Should you ‘see something’, you should not only ‘say something’ to the individual committing the potential infraction, but also to the proper school administrators or local law enforcement or county child welfare agency (mandated reporting requirement). It is up to the administrators, law enforcement, or county officials to conduct an investigation to confirm or refute the validity of the allegation.



Recognizing that all employees are considered educators, educators are expected to act in a manner that reflects professional, moral, and ethical practices within established boundaries. By doing so, employees should be less susceptible to false allegations and instrumental in maintaining public trust, confidence in the safety of our schools, and the integrity of public education.

For more information regarding best practices for child abuse prevention, including sample policies and guidelines, please contact an ASCIP risk services consultant or visit the website at <http://ascip.org/risk-services/child-abuse-prevention-resources/>.