

**Communication Boundaries (Secondary)**

*A parent calls you because she found text messages on her daughter's cell phone and is concerned about her daughter's very personal relationship with Ms. V, who is an experienced teacher and is well- liked by students. She frequently offers students extra help after school, so it's not unusual to see students visiting her classroom after school. Sometimes she even treats them to snacks or trinkets. She has tutored this parent's child in a variety of subjects over a two-year period. During that time, Ms. V sent emails and text messages to the student using her cell phone. At first, the exchanges were general – sometimes unrelated to schoolwork (e.g., asking about a family member, or how friendships were going). Recently, the student began to text Ms. V about more personal feelings and relationships. In response, Ms. V shares her own experience regarding love, affection, and relationships gone wrong, and offers relationship advice to the student.*

**Discussion Questions**

1. What initial actions should you take?
2. Is this information enough for reasonable suspicion of child abuse? If not, would you ask clarifying questions to help with your determination of reasonable suspicion?
3. What policy considerations would you think about?

**Keep in Mind****District Policy**

All employees with reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect *must* report the suspected abuse or neglect to a Child Protective Services Agency (CPSA) pursuant to the law and the *Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Requirements* bulletin.

**Reasonable Suspicion Definition**

Reasonable suspicion means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to contemplate a suspicion, based upon facts or allegations that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing from a person's training, education, and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect.

**Clarifying Questions**

An employee who does not have reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect may ask clarifying questions to help with the employee's determination of reasonable suspicion. If an employee, however, does have reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect, the employee *must* file a SCAR without further clarifying. Also, an employee with reasonable suspicion *must* file a SCAR even if the CPSA states "handle it administratively."

**Required Steps for Filing a SCAR**

Filing a SCAR consists of two steps:

- (1) Telephone call *must* be made immediately, or as soon as practically possible to a CPSA; and
- (2) Written report *must* be filed with a CPA within 36 hours of receiving the information. The CPSA will either be the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) or the local law enforcement agency. Generally, SCARs are filed with DCFS if the alleged perpetrator is in the home, and if the allegations involve an out-of-home perpetrator (e.g.: employee), the SCARs are filed with local law enforcement (e.g.: LAPD). However, the CPSA, not the mandated reporter, is responsible for ensuring that the report gets to the appropriate agency (P.C. section 11165.9)