

Appropriate Touching

Guidelines for Teachers and School Personnel

Chula Vista Elementary School District

“Each Child Is An Individual of Great Worth”

PURPOSE

The Chula Vista Elementary School District wants you as educators and school personnel to carry out your professional responsibilities in a caring and appropriate manner.

We want you to continue providing extra-curricular and enrichment activities.

We want you to feel safe and to have guidelines that will assist you in creating and maintaining a safer environment for you and our students.

Establish Ground Rules

Setting a classroom climate with ground rules can assist in classroom management and in creating a safe place for students and teachers.

1. Conduct classroom discussions regarding comfortable and uncomfortable touch.
2. Establish agreed-upon guidelines for touch.
3. Post guidelines and review periodically.

GUIDELINES...

Avoid touching students unless necessary to maintain order, protect property, or protect the health and safety of students.

Remember to keep in mind the cultural perspective and personal context of touch from the student's perspective. Cultural influences, beliefs, and personal history affect a student's comfort level regarding personal boundaries.

SAFER VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- Avoid/eliminate sexist comments
- Avoid sexual comments and innuendo
- Talk to all students in a consistent manner

SAFER EXTRA-CURRICULAR AND ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

- Tell your administrator your destination
- Get parental permission
- Take more than one student
- Take more than one adult

SAFER INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS

- When alone with a student, make sure there is a door open
- Do not spend a majority of your time with one student or a single group of students
- Treat all students in a consistent manner

Special circumstances will arise where touch that exceeds these guidelines will be necessary. Special education, programs for young children, nursing, and coaching may require additional student contact for the health and hygiene needs of the student. Be clear (to yourself and the student) about when, where, why, and how you are touching the student.

Reasonable and necessary containment may be used to prevent injury to persons or damage to property.

LAWS and POLICIES

California state law requires that all professional school personnel report both known and suspected incidences of child abuse and neglect to Child Protective Services and/or the police immediately (or as soon as practical) by phone if you have reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred. Do not call parents or guardians.

Board Policy No. 5141.4 states in part that known or suspected child abuse shall be reported immediately or as soon as practical by telephone to Child Protective Services and to the police department which serves the residential area in which the child resides. Employees are encouraged, but not required, to notify the site administrator, designee, or nurse as soon as possible after child abuse is suspected and may request assistance in making the initial report by telephone. Within 36 hours of making the telephone report, a completed written report on Form DOJ SS 8572 must be mailed to the agency listed on the back of the form. Copies of all written reports must be sent to the Pupil Personnel Services Department. Anyone who fails to report an instance of child abuse is guilty of a misdemeanor. This is punishable by confinement in jail for a term not to exceed six months or by a fine of not more than \$1,000, or both. A person also may be held civilly liable for damages for any injury to the child after failure to report.

When a report of abuse or neglect is necessary, teachers and professional school personnel need to follow the legal requirements set forth through legislation, the standards outlined in the "Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Manual" and specific policies and procedures outlined by the District.

The law provides for your legal protection as well. If you are accused of improper or criminal conduct, you have the right to a full investigation and protections. These are outlined in California State law and will be provided by the Chula Vista Elementary School District Human Resources Office.

RESOURCES

Pupil Personnel Services
Sharon Casey, Executive Director
619-425-9600, x1700

Child Abuse Placement & Protective Services, San Diego County
24-Hour Hot Lines
858-560-2191 or 800-344-6000

Chula Vista Police Department
619-691-5124

San Diego Police Department
619- 531-2260

San Diego County Sheriff's Department
619-692-8000

Employee Assistance Program*
1-800-468-5667

*This program offers confidential, no cost, short term counseling and referrals to all District employees and their family members.

Training and technical assistance regarding child abuse law, District policy, and safe curricula is available in the Pupil Personnel Services Office at (619) 425-9600, x1700.

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