

Child Abuse Reporting

References: Penal Code Sections 261, 264.1, 273a, 273d, 285, 286, 288, 288a, 289, 647a, and 11164-11174.3; Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 300, 318, and 601; Family Code Sections 7802, 7807, 7808, 7820-7829, 7890, and 7892

The Palo Verde Community College District recognizes the responsibility of its staff to report to the appropriate agency when there is a reasonable suspicion that an abuse or neglect of a child may have occurred. Mandated reporters include faculty, educational administrators and classified staff.

Child abuse is defined as physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and/or emotional maltreatment. This procedure addresses the sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and/or sexual abuse of a child; the willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child; incidents of corporal punishment or injury against a child; abuse in out-of-home care; and the severe and/or general neglect of a child (definitions contained in Penal Code Section 11165).

“Reasonable Suspicion” occurs when “it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain such a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience to suspect child abuse” (Penal Code Section 11166(a)).

A child protective agency is a police or sheriff’s department, a county probation department, or a county welfare department. School district police or security departments are not child protective agencies (Penal Code Section 11165.9).

Any person not mandated by law to report suspected child abuse has immunity unless the report is proven to be false and the person reporting knows it is false, or the report is made with reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the incident. Reporting is an individual responsibility. An employee making a report cannot be required to disclose his or her identity to the employer (Penal Code Section 11167(f)). However, a person who fails to make a required report is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to six (6) months in jail and/or up to a \$1,000 fine (Penal Code Section 11172(e)).

Mandated reporters must report immediately any reasonable suspicion of child abuse to a local child protective agency and follow up with a written report within 36 hours.

No mandated reporter who reports a known or suspected instance of child abuse shall be civilly or criminally liable for any report required or authorized by the Penal Code. Any person other than a child care custodian reporting a known or suspected instance of child abuse shall not incur any liability as a result of making any report of child abuse, unless it can be proven that a false report was made and the person knew that the report was false (Penal Code Section 11172(a)).

When an official of the District releases a minor pupil to a peace officer for the purpose of removing the minor from the campus, the District official shall take immediate steps to notify the parent or guardian regarding the release of the minor to the officer, and regarding the place to

which the minor is reportedly being taken (Education Code Section 87044), except when a minor has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse, as defined in Section 11165 of the Penal Code, or pursuant to Section 305 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. In those cases, the official shall provide the peace officer with the address and telephone number of the minor's parent or guardian.

Non-accidental physical injury is considered to be a health and safety emergency, and parental consent is not required for release of student information under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, or the California Student Records Act (Education Code Sections 76200 et seq.).

Information relevant to the incident of child abuse may be given to an investigator from a child protective agency who is investigating the known or suspected cause of child abuse (Penal Code Section 11167(b)).

The District will distribute this procedure to all employees.

09/03/08 College Council Approval
09/23/08 Board First Read
10/28/08 Board Second Read and Approval