

'Mandated reporters'

New training requirements change for all school staff

Effective January 2015, all districts are required to train employees annually on what they need to know in order to identify and report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. Every district also must be able to provide proof that employees received the training, which is to take place within six weeks of the start of each school year.

School district employees qualify as "mandated reporters" and are required to report all known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. At the time of hiring, they will receive statements informing them of their obligations.

It's not the job of mandated reporters to determine if allegations are valid, only to report whether abuse and neglect are reasonably suspected or whether a student has shared information leading the employee to believe abuse or neglect has occurred. The employee is required to contact the appropriate law enforcement or county child welfare agency



directly. **Their obligation is not satisfied by reporting only to a supervisor or to the school.**

A report should be made immediately by telephone and should be followed up in writing. A report also may be filed at the same time with the district or county office of education, depending on current policy. Districts and COEs, however, do not investigate child abuse allegations, nor do they attempt to contact anyone suspected of child abuse or neglect. Your own district may have additional policies, but these policies do not take the place of, and cannot contradict the requirements of, reporting to an appropriate local law enforcement or child welfare agency.

An online training module for educators is available at <http://mandatedreporterca.com>.

For additional information on the child abuse identification and reporting guidelines visit www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/ap/childabuse. SIA will be launching an online training and tracking program for all members this fall.

Department of Justice releases new ADA resource guide

Do you know the two questions that can be asked to determine if a dog brought to a school campus is a service animal? Are you required to allow a qualified person with a disability to use a Segway as a mobility device at your school? What is the phone number "711" and how is it used?

These and many other questions can be answered in the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) new guide for public entities on their general responsibilities prohibiting discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The document, titled "ADA Update: A Primer for State and Local Governments" (ADA Primer), includes the most current information on many of the key administrative obligations relevant to school districts.

The ADA-implementing regulations were revised by the DOJ in September 2010 and included rule changes on such topics as service animals, effective communication, and wheelchairs and other power-driven mobility devices. The

ADA Primer provides an extensive introductory overview on these and many other general ADA requirement topics consistent with the updated rules that became effective in March 2012. It's written in easy-to-understand, non-legal language and contains many real-world examples that help clarify and illustrate specific requirements.

The ADA Primer and many other useful resource documents, including the newly revised 2013 California Access Compliance Advisory Reference Manual, are available on the SIA website under the Loss Prevention tab at <http://www.sia-jpa.org/loss-prevention/americans-with-disabilities-act-ada>.

Note: The ADA Primer contains building standard details on Page 13 regarding accessible parking requirements that are not applicable in California. Please see the 2013 CBC Chapter 11B accessibility standards under Section 11B-502 for relevant information on this subject.



Avoid the backhanded feedback trap

Many managers use a feedback technique that “sandwiches” criticism between two positive statements in an attempt to make the criticism as constructive as possible without incurring negative and awkward feelings among all concerned. Here’s an example of how this type of “sandwich” feedback works:

“Barb, you’re a wonderful communicator, but during the last three meetings you dominated the conversation and even interrupted others while speaking. I’d appreciate you being more aware and giving others a chance to contribute. And by the way, your recent report outlining team goals was well-written.”

While seemingly an effective approach that ends things on a positive note, it’s actually an ineffective and backhanded way of delivering feedback because:

1. **“But” is an eraser word.** We’ve all been taught that anything that follows the word “but” negates everything said prior to it. The positive information is discounted.
2. **The message doesn’t sound sincere.** Because too many of us are familiar with this strategy, it screams tactic, which lowers trust and believability.
3. **It destroys the truth behind the positive messages.** Most of us walk away from the “sandwiched” approach, hearing only the critical feedback.

Instead, try this approach:

1. Share the specific event, behavior or performance that concerns you.
2. Explain how this creates a challenge.

“But” is an eraser word...it negates everything said prior to it...the positive information is discounted.



3. Ask for the desired behavior change.
4. Be supportive and listen.

Using the prior example, you could rework it to say something like this:

“Barb, at the past three team meetings I noticed you spoke most of the time and interrupted others. As a result, others ended up not contributing and we could be losing out on some great input. During our meeting later today, I’d like you to be more aware of your communication style and allow others the floor. I still want your input today. The team needs you and values your contribution. Let me know how I can support you and your ideas.”

This illustrates a much more sincere way of helping an employee understand that while her style is a bit too contentious, she’s still valued and her contribution to the process is a key part of a broader team effort.

Source: Communication Briefings



Handle, store all confidential information with care

Throughout the year we come in contact with numerous documents containing personal information on students, their families and school staff. With the growing concerns about identity theft, it's more important than ever to appropriately retain, properly store and carefully dispose of all documents. Here are some guidelines:

- **Keep all signed permission forms and waivers for two years.** Although specific events may be over, a claim can still be filed months later.
- **All documents containing addresses, phone numbers, social security numbers and other personal information** must be shredded and securely disposed of when no longer needed.
- **Each site should have a shredder and make it available** to all staff members.
- **To prevent fire hazard,** ensure that shredded paper is disposed of regularly.
- **All documents containing personal information** must be stored securely in locked cabinets.



Be cautious with the records kept on personal and laptop computers.

- **If documents containing personal information cannot be locked up in the classroom,** store in the school office.
- **Be cautious with the records kept** on personal and laptop computers.
- **Consult district policy regarding document storage** and disposal for further recommendations.

Quality leadership skills bring good teams and productivity together

Quality leaders have positive personality and character traits in common, attributes that make others want to follow, participate and contribute. Here are some of those leadership qualities:

- **Good leaders keep their word.** Obstacles sometimes pop up and unexpected challenges throw things off course. Setbacks are inevitable. However, good leaders always do everything in their power to make good on commitments. When events conspire to block plans and intentions, good leaders will explain what happened, come up with alternatives and get to work.
- **Good leaders aren't afraid to talk about failures.** They discuss employees' mistakes without castigating them, and offer as much information as they can about job stability or changes in staffing. Open communication, even if it concerns bad news, helps keep employees' fears in check.
- **Good leaders make time for feedback.** They tell employees how their efforts are meeting expectations and how their performance is helping the team meet its goals and objectives (or not). They also encourage feedback about leadership decisions, ideas, actions and effectiveness.

Source: Communication Briefings





WeTip combats campus crime with creativity

The start of a new school year is a great opportunity to promote the WeTip program. As staff, students and parents take time to review campus procedures, be sure to include the benefits of WeTip in your materials and discussions.

Our schools are affected by a variety of crimes and potentially dangerous activities including arson, illegal drug use, graffiti, vandalism, weapons use and bullying. WeTip is both a prevention tool and a crime-reporting instrument. By promoting the WeTip program among students, staff and neighbors, schools declare that they will not tolerate crimes on their campuses and put everyone on notice that their sites are being watched.

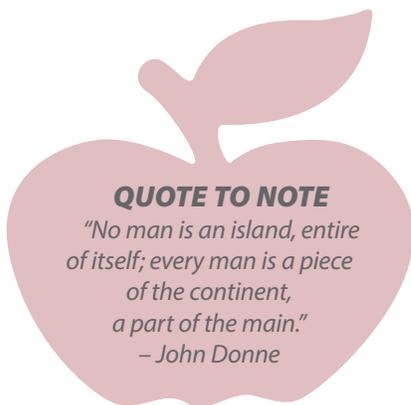
Callers to WeTip are totally anonymous, not just confidential. There's no tracing of calls or any way to identify callers. This may be an incentive to anyone who is hesitant about sharing information for fear of being identified. For many crimes, a reward of up to \$1,000 per successful crime reporting outcome is offered. A system has also been established to pay any rewards anonymously.

In order for the program to be a success, it must be promoted regularly and there are a number of tools and resources to help:

- **Posters to display around school campuses** for all to see. It's a good idea to regularly change the posters to keep the message fresh.

- **Magnets and brochures** to distribute to families and neighbors at back-to-school nights.
- **Incident-specific flyers** made by WeTip for posting and distribution following an actual campus crime.
- **Screen-savers on student computers** to promote the WeTip phone number: (800) 78-CRIME.
- **Assemblies and regular announcements** to remind students about WeTip.

Each district has a liaison for the program. You're encouraged to contact that individual to request posters, arrange for a presentation on the program to your school, or to learn more about the program in general. For your liaison contact or general information, contact Teresa Franco at tfranco@sia-jpa.org or 916-364-1281, ext. 256.



QUOTE TO NOTE

*"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."
– John Donne*

*The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).
Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder.*



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