

## **Sonora ISD Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse**

### **Overview**

Responding to child abuse and neglect involves protecting children from harm and supporting families to reduce the risk of future harm to children. Reports from professionals and concerned citizens are received by child protective services (CPS) staff alerting them to concerns about a child's welfare. CPS staff may initiate an investigation to determine if a child has been or is at risk of being harmed. Staff may also assess the child's and family's needs or engage in other interventions to support the family's efforts to provide a safe, nurturing environment for their children. CPS professionals may work with law enforcement, courts, other professionals, and community members to protect children and support families.

At the beginning of each school year, the signs of sexual abuse are reviewed with all faculty and staff of Sonora ISD. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination you should take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the child:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refused to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex
- Is secretive and isolated
- Is jealous or controlling with family members

### **Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect**

Persons required to report include (Fam. Code 261.101):

- A professional, for purposes of reporting laws, is an individual who is licensed or certified by the State or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the State and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children.
- Professionals include:
  - Teachers or daycare employees

- Nurses, doctors or employees of a clinic or health-care facility that provides reproductive services
- Juvenile probation officers or juvenile detention or correction officers