

Mandatory Reporting Professional Development

Audio Narration Script

Slide 1 — Mandatory Reporting

Welcome to our Mandatory Reporting Professional Development.

The purpose of this training is simple, but incredibly important: to make sure every employee understands their responsibility when they suspect that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect.

Recent changes to Arizona law have strengthened and clarified those responsibilities. Throughout this training, we'll walk through what has changed, what you are required to do, and most importantly, how we work together to protect students.

Slide 2 — Arizona SB1127

Arizona Senate Bill 1127 strengthens mandatory reporting requirements with three goals in mind: protecting children, protecting employees, and protecting schools.

While mandatory reporting is not new, the law places increased emphasis on the **individual responsibility of the person who has knowledge or a reasonable belief that abuse or neglect may have occurred.**

The biggest message to remember throughout this training is this: **your responsibility to report belongs to you.**

Slide 2 — The Why

So, why is this important?

First and foremost, mandatory reporting exists to protect students.

It also ensures that we comply with Arizona law and that concerns are reported immediately so the appropriate agencies can respond.

Every employee has a personal legal duty to report. Reporting something internally to a principal, supervisor, or district administrator does not replace your legal responsibility to make the required report.

Slide 2 — What Has Changed?

There are several important areas of emphasis under the updated law.

Individual responsibility has increased. If you have direct knowledge, you are personally responsible for reporting it.

You cannot delegate your reporting responsibility to someone else.

Reports must be made immediately.

Internal district reporting does not replace the legally required report.

There are also additional requirements surrounding employee misconduct and protections for employees who make good-faith reports.

Slide 2 — Who Must Report?

Who is considered a mandatory reporter in our schools?

Essentially, everyone working with or around our students.

This includes teachers, substitute teachers, administrators, counselors, nurses, classified employees, coaches, contractors, volunteers, governing board members, and others serving our schools.

Mandatory reporting is not simply an administrator's responsibility. **It is everyone's responsibility.**

Slide 2 — When Do I Report?

You should make a report immediately when you develop a **reasonable belief** that abuse, neglect, physical injury, a reportable offense, or medical neglect may have occurred.

The important phrase here is *reasonable belief*.

You do not need proof.

You do not need to know exactly what happened.

And you should not delay reporting while you try to gather additional evidence.

If the information available to you creates a reasonable belief that something may have happened, you report.

Slide 3 — Reasonable Belief vs. Investigation

One of the most important distinctions in mandatory reporting is the difference between **recognizing a concern** and **investigating a concern**.

Our job is not to investigate.

Our job is to observe, recognize when something creates a reasonable belief, and report it.

Once the report is made, the investigation belongs to the Department of Child Safety or law enforcement.

Remember this simple sequence:

Observe. Report. Allow the appropriate agency to investigate.

Slide 3 — Step 1: Recognize

The first step is recognizing possible indicators.

Those indicators could include physical injuries, something a student discloses to you, significant behavioral changes, signs of neglect, indicators of sexual abuse, or a concerning pattern that you have observed over time.

An indicator does not automatically mean abuse has occurred.

Again, you are not determining guilt or proving what happened. You are determining whether the information creates a reasonable belief that should be reported.

Slide 3 — Step 2: Report Immediately

Once you have a reasonable belief, the next step is to **report immediately**.

Reports are made to the Department of Child Safety or the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Depending on the circumstances—particularly when the alleged offender does not have care, custody, or control of the child—the appropriate report may be made directly to law enforcement.

The important part is that we do not delay a required report while waiting for someone else to make a decision.

Slide 4 — Direct Knowledge

This is one of the most important changes to understand.

If you have **direct knowledge** of suspected abuse or neglect, you must personally make the report.

You cannot tell your supervisor and assume that your responsibility has been fulfilled.

You cannot ask another employee to make the report for you.

Your individual reporting responsibility remains with you.

Slide 4 — Cannot Delegate

This point is worth repeating because it represents such an important responsibility.

Each mandated reporter must personally report when required, regardless of whether a supervisor has also been notified.

There may be multiple people who become aware of the same situation. Notifying another mandated reporter does not automatically remove your own reporting obligation.

When you have the reporting responsibility, **you cannot delegate it.**

Slide 4 — Internal Reporting

Our district may also require you to notify a supervisor or administrator according to district procedures.

However, internal reporting and legal reporting are two different things.

Telling your principal, calling District Office, completing an incident form, or notifying another administrator **never replaces a legally required report.**

Follow district procedures, but never allow an internal process to delay your mandatory report.

Slide 5 — How to Report

When a report is required, it should be made immediately by phone or electronically through the appropriate reporting system.

Provide the information you know, which may include information about the student and parent or guardian, the nature and extent of the suspected abuse or neglect, and other relevant facts.

You are not expected to have every answer.

Report what you know and allow the appropriate agency to determine what happens next.

Slide 5 — Reporting Employee Misconduct

There are additional responsibilities when suspected misconduct involves a school employee and a minor.

Suspected employee misconduct involving minors must be reported immediately to local law enforcement when required.

There may also be additional district-level reporting responsibilities involving both certificated and non-certificated employees, including written reporting to the State Board within the required timeline.

Because of those additional requirements, administrators should immediately involve the appropriate district-level personnel while ensuring that the required law-enforcement report is not delayed.

Slide 5 — School Resource Officers

Another important clarification involves School Resource Officers and School Safety Officers.

Simply reporting your concern to an SRO or School Safety Officer does not necessarily satisfy Arizona's mandatory reporting requirements.

Make sure the required report is made to the appropriate agency.

Do not assume that telling someone on campus means your legal responsibility has automatically been fulfilled.

Slide 5 — Best Practices

If a student discloses something concerning to you, your response matters.

Listen calmly.

Reassure the student that they did the right thing by telling you.

Do not promise confidentiality, because you may be legally required to share the information.

Avoid asking investigative or leading questions.

Report immediately and document only the facts.

Your role is to be a safe adult who listens and reports—not the person who determines exactly what occurred.

Slide 6 — Investigations and Student Interviews

Schools do not investigate criminal allegations.

That responsibility belongs to law enforcement and the appropriate investigative agencies.

Likewise, potential victims should be interviewed according to established county forensic interview protocols.

This protects the integrity of the investigation and, most importantly, helps prevent a child from unnecessarily having to repeatedly recount a traumatic experience.

Slide 6 — Employee Protections

Employees who make reports in good faith receive important legal protections.

Good-faith reporters are provided immunity and are protected from retaliation.

An employee should not face discipline, reassignment, demotion, dismissal, a negative evaluation, or adverse changes in duties because they made a good-faith report.

The system is designed to encourage people to speak up when they reasonably believe a child may need protection.

Slide 6 — Failure to Report

Failing to fulfill mandatory reporting responsibilities can have serious consequences.

Depending on the circumstances, failure to report may result in criminal consequences, including a Class 1 misdemeanor or Class 6 felony, as well as possible State Board discipline.

But beyond the legal consequences, remember why this responsibility exists.

A report may be the action that allows someone to intervene and protect a child.

When in doubt about whether your reasonable belief requires a report, do not investigate or wait for proof.

Slide 7 — Decision Tree

Here is a simple way to remember the process.

You observe or become aware of a concern.

Ask yourself whether the information creates a reasonable belief that abuse, neglect, or another reportable offense may have occurred.

If it does, make the required report immediately.

Then notify your supervisor according to district policy and document the facts as required.

And throughout the process: **do not investigate.**

Slide 7 — Administrator Responsibilities

Administrators have additional responsibilities.

Administrators should ensure required reports occur without unnecessary delays, follow applicable State Board reporting requirements, and follow district procedures involving allegations against employees.

An administrator should never create an internal process that prevents or delays an employee from fulfilling their individual mandatory reporting responsibility.

Slide 7 — What Our Handbook Says

Our own district procedure reinforces these expectations.

All district employees—including substitute teachers—and Board members who reasonably believe that a minor is or has been the victim of child abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, or another reportable offense are required to immediately report that information to the Department of Child Safety, the appropriate law enforcement agency, or tribal law enforcement as applicable.

This expectation is outlined in District Procedure 4-204.A.

Slide 8 — Key Takeaways

As we finish, there are four things I want everyone to remember.

Every employee is a mandated reporter.

Reasonable belief—not proof—is the standard.

When a report is required, report immediately.

And above everything else:

Protect children first.

You are not being asked to determine whether abuse occurred. You are being asked to recognize concerns, fulfill your reporting responsibility, and allow the appropriate professionals to investigate.

Thank you for taking this responsibility seriously and for doing your part every day to keep our students safe.