

SECTION: PUPIL SAFETY AND CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION COMPLIANCE (SB 848)

Policy Statement:

In accordance with California Senate Bill 848 (The Safe Learning Environments Act), Howard Gardner Community Charter School is committed to providing a safe, secure, and supportive environment for all students. This institution strictly prohibits any form of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or professional boundary violations by school personnel, volunteers, or independent contractors.

Expanded Mandated Reporter & Training Requirements:

1. **Coverage:** All school personnel—including certificated and classified employees, governing board members, independent contractors, and regular volunteers who interact with students—are recognized as Mandated Reporters under California law.
2. **Annual Training:** All covered individuals must complete annual Mandated Reporter training within the first six weeks of the school year (or within six weeks of hire/engagement). In addition, all personnel must complete annual supplemental Child Abuse and Grooming Prevention training focusing on recognizing improper behavior, maintaining professional boundaries, and understanding the "reasonable suspicion" threshold.

Professional Boundaries and Electronic Communications:

School personnel, volunteers, and contractors must maintain clear professional boundaries at all times. Direct, one-on-one digital or electronic communications (including text messaging, social media, and messaging applications) with students that exclude the student's parent, guardian, or school administration are strictly prohibited unless explicitly authorized for urgent educational or safety purposes.

Hiring and Misconduct Reporting Procedures:

1. **Prior Employment Screening:** Applicants for any position (certificated or non-certificated) must disclose all prior employment with any educational entity. Howard Gardner Community Charter School will conduct formal inquiries with all previous school employers regarding any historical credible complaints, pending investigations, or discipline related to egregious misconduct or child safety violations.
2. **Statewide Data Reporting:** In compliance with state mandates, any active investigation into egregious misconduct, grooming, or child abuse involving a minor will be reported to the Statewide Data System within 10 days of commencement. Final substantiated findings will be updated within 10 days of completion.

3. **Prohibition of Non-Disclosure Agreements:** Howard Gardner Community Charter School will not enter into any settlement agreement, contract, or severance package that attempts to conceal, expunge, or omit allegations or findings of child abuse, sexual misconduct, or boundary violations.