

CATEGORY: Addressing suspicion of abuse	Case Study # 14
TITLE: Boundary violation	DATE: 12-21-2014
SUB-TITLE: Missing historical personnel documentation	
LOCATION: Central America	
<p>The Assistant Principal of the High School came to the Director describing a complaint from a student. One of the girls came forth to tell the Assistant Principal about the High School Accounting teacher's behavior when she was alone in the classroom with him.</p> <p>Why was she alone in the classroom with him? She did poorly on an exam and he gave her a retake of the exam during the HS lunch hour. He actually sat next to her while she was taking the exam and he touched her leg, her hand and her neck. She felt uncomfortable about this and decided to tell the Assistant Principal. She felt comfortable telling her because she was female and, as a host country national, she had worked at the school for many years. The students all knew her well and trusted her.</p> <p>The Director, also a female, asked to speak to the girl directly. The student described the incident in great detail. She also mentioned that a few of her girlfriends also had similar situations with him. "He gives us the creeps." In addition, she mentioned that in class he would often talk about 'sexual topics' and tell stories which were off-color.</p> <p>She agreed to write and sign a letter about the event. She told us that a classmate was also willing to come forward. Her comment about the events and her mental deliberations convinced the Director that the situation was very credible and that the teacher was behaving inappropriately; the student described agonizing over "was his behavior inappropriate or wasn't it? Am I overreacting or is he doing something wrong? Should I say something or shouldn't I?"</p> <p>The Principal spoke to the second girl from this class who also described how the teacher told her she was a 'fatty' and then put his hand on her shoulder; it made her 'cringe'. She also related how this teacher actually told the students that he got himself fired from the previous school in order to get financial indemnification. She was also willing to write her observations in a letter.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal informed the Director that this teacher was always considered "weird" for his behavior. She also recalled hearing that he was 'laid off' from his previous school. Thus, the Director searched his personnel file. He had been teaching part time at this school for 8 years. The Director phoned his previous school and was told that he worked there 8 years but was fired for insubordination. That was when he joined this school. However, there was no documentation in the file.</p> <p>The Director immediately met with the Principals, updated the Board President</p>	

and conferred with legal counsel. She was advised to have him sign a letter of resignation and pay the indemnification that he was entitled to by law for termination. Due to the local labor laws, this was necessary to avoid legal action on his side. To fire him for cause would necessitate going to court and putting the students on the stand.

In the meantime, the Board President also asked her daughter about this teacher. She responded that he was always flirting with the girls and he would talk to the students about their boyfriends and girlfriends. He would also say things like, 'if you are good to me I will be good to you.' She also said that the students considered him weird."

The next day the teacher was called to a meeting with the Director, the HR Manager and the High School Principal. After being informed of the accusation of inappropriate behavior, he did not deny it and signed a letter of resignation. He was subsequently escorted off campus.

Thereafter, the Director learned from a veteran administrator that he had been warned in the past about his inappropriate conversations with students. He had actually told the students details of his private life, including cheating on his wife, but, told the students that he learned his lesson. He gave advice to the students such as 'if you steal, steal big.' There was no evidence of any warning or reprimand in the file.

The parents of both students came to thank the Director for her quick and appropriate actions in separating this teacher from the school. The students also came and thanked the Director.

QUESTIONS-COMMENTS-CAVEATS:

See the 30 Guiding Questions
