



# **New California Law Expands Child Abuse Prevention Procedures to Private Schools: 4 Action Steps for Compliance**

Insights

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California private and religious K-12 schools will have to stand up new policies to promote safe learning environments and prevent child abuse on their campuses starting next year under a new Golden State law recently signed by Governor Newsom. Starting in July 2026, private and religious education institutions will have to comply with abuse prevention procedures that already apply to public schools, including developing school safety policy, mandated reporter trainings, and certain personnel vetting procedures. Private and religious institutions should start taking steps now to come into compliance with the new law before next year, or could potentially face action by the state. Here's what SB 848 means for your school and what should you do to get ready ahead of next year's compliance deadline.

## **What Does SB 848 Do?**

SB 848 extends existing safety and abuse prevention law to private schools while also expanding the list of school personnel to whom its mandated reporter requirements apply.

The new law requires schools to do the following by July 1, 2026:

- Adopt new policies detailing school safety and professional boundaries between students and school personnel;
- Prepare annual, appropriate abuse prevention education for students;
- Implement mandated reporter and abuse prevention training for all school personnel, including volunteers, contractors, and governing board members; and
- Update school hiring and vetting procedures to include consideration of the statewide Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) misconduct database.

## **Safety and Boundaries Policies**

Under the new law, private schools must adopt written policies that are aimed at promoting safe learning environments for students both inside and outside of the classroom while also allowing for easy supervision of students. Additionally, superintendents will be required to make available information and resources regarding appropriate boundaries between students and school faculty.

## Mandated Reporter and Abuse Prevention Training

The Superintendent of Public Instruction, as the leader of the state's Department of Education, will release guidelines on how to instruct students on abuse prevention. Schools must use this guidance and any additional information provided by the Superintendent to provide annual abuse prevention education to students. If they wish, parents and legal guardians may choose to opt out of the abuse prevention education for their child.

Schools may look to the State Department of Education for instruction on the detection and reporting of child abuse, abuse prevention resources to distribute to school faculty, and annual training modules for school faculty abuse prevention training. Importantly, school volunteers are now included in the list of mandated reporters who should be provided with the above resources, an update to *both* public and private school requirements.

## Working With the CTC Misconduct Database

Private schools must also start vetting their staff through and reporting investigations to CTC's misconduct database by July 1, 2027. Institutions are expected to use the database to screen for credible and/or substantiated investigations into "egregious misconduct" engaged in by applicants, and report credible and/or substantiated investigations into egregious misconduct by employees to the database. Schools must also report the departures of suspected employees during misconduct investigations.

As defined by the Education Code, "**egregious misconduct**" includes sex offenses, drug offenses, willfully harming, injuring, or endangering a child, unlawful corporal punishment, and child abuse or neglect, among other similar categories of misconduct.

## What Should Schools Do Now?

To ensure compliance with SB 848, California schools should consider the following:

1. Familiarize yourself with available abuse prevention information and resources prior to the drafting of new school safety policies and provision of annual mandated reporter trainings.
2. Compile a list of all school faculty, contractors, volunteers, etc. who would be required to attend mandated reporter trainings.
3. Revise interviewing and hiring guidelines to reflect consideration of the CTC misconduct database during the hiring process, and train hiring personnel accordingly.
4. Update employee handbook policies to include notice regarding the provision of details surrounding employee misconduct, employee departures during misconduct investigations to the CTC misconduct database.

## Conclusion

We will continue to monitor developments in this area, so make sure you are subscribed to [Fisher Phillips' Insight System](#) to get the most up-to-date information. If you have questions regarding SB 848 and its application to your institution, please contact your Fisher Phillips attorney, the author of this Insight, or any attorney in any of [our California offices](#) or on [our Education team](#).

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