

Teacher's aide accused in 2d abuse at Dorchester school King, Harbor schools sites of allegations

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Superintendent Carol R. Johnson said anyone jeopardizing a child's safety in school "must be dealt with quickly."

A teacher's aide accused of inappropriate conduct Monday with a nonverbal, autistic student at Harbor Pilot Middle School is also suspected in a similar alleged incident last year, authorities said yesterday.

LaShawn Hill, a Boston public school employee for seven years, is accused of acting inappropriately with another unidentified student at King K-8 School in Dorchester, where he worked as a paraprofessional last year, Police Commissioner Edward F. Davis said at a press conference with Mayor Thomas M. Menino and School Superintendent Carol R. Johnson.

Police and school officials offered few details yesterday about the incident at the King School last year.

They declined to say whether it was reported to police when it occurred, as required by law in any case of inappropriate contact or sexual abuse.

"When things like this come up, we have to be aggressive and assume if this person has been in other schools that there may have been other children harmed," Johnson said yesterday. "We want to make sure we explore every possibility."

Davis said that police have issued a summons for Hill, who has been placed on administrative leave from the school, to appear tomorrow in Dorchester Municipal Court on a misdemeanor charge of lewd and lascivious conduct in the Harbor School incident.

He said police did not have enough probable cause to arrest Hill for his alleged contact with the student, who is 14 years old and unable to speak.

He said police have also discovered that several computers were missing from Harbor School in Dorchester and that Hill, 33, is the suspect in that case, but has not been charged.

Police, he said, are working closely with Suffolk District Attorney Daniel F. Conley's office to determine whether more charges will be filed against Hill.

"We will work tirelessly until we get all the facts on the table in this and hold people accountable for this behavior," Davis said.

Monday's alleged incident at the Harbor School has deeply disturbed the victim's immediate relatives, who said yesterday that they felt betrayed by officials who were supposed to protect their child.

“He is a victim, and justice has to be served,” said the boy’s mother, who did not want her name published. She said she plans to hire a lawyer before speaking publicly to the press.

In the Harbor School incident, a teacher called police at 2:30 p.m. and told them that she had witnessed an assault by Hill on the nonverbal student.

The Globe does not name alleged victims of sexual abuse.

The child’s mother was called to the school, and the boy was taken to a local hospital, his grandmother said.

“We are outraged and devastated,” said the grandmother, who also did not want her name published. “We are all in a state of shock.”

Johnson and her staff met with Harbor School parents Tuesday night about the incident.

The superintendent said she also called the principals at three other schools where Hill had worked.

Before the Harbor School, Hill was a teacher’s aide at King school last year and was employed at Lee Elementary from 2004 to 2006 and at Lee Academy between 2006 and 2010, Johnson said.

School officials said Johnson learned about Monday’s incident when she called the King school and the principal told her about the alleged incident last year.

“I can’t emphasize enough that every school in Boston must be one of the most safe places for children to be,” Johnson said.

“We must do everything possible to ensure that safety. Anyone who jeopardize that safety must be dealt with quickly and seriously.”

Asked if Hill had been disciplined previously or had displayed any other warning signs, Johnson said that all information about the employee had been forwarded to the police.

She declined to discuss specifics.

Johnson said that because of the serious nature of the allegation, the School Department is moving swiftly to terminate Hill.

The city has established a hot line to encourage parents to report any information they might have. The number is 617-635-3050.

“I want to reassure parents, staff, and students that we are taking this matter very seriously,” Menino said.

“We are moving quickly to get more detailed information to them as we continue with this aggressive investigation,” the mayor said.

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