

Personnel

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the responsibilities of District staff members under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA), 325 ILCS 5/1 *et seq.* Each school principal or designee shall annually review this policy with staff members during the first two weeks of the school year.

Mandated Reporters

All school personnel, regardless of their position or assignment, are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. All personnel shall complete the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services *Acknowledgment of Mandated Reporter Status* Form. A copy of the completed form shall be maintained in the personnel file of each District employee.

Reporting Suspected Abuse and/or Neglect

Any District staff member having reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them in their professional capacity may be an abused or neglected child shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) by calling the DCFS Hotline at 1-800-25ABUSE. The individual making the report shall also immediately notify his/her supervisor of the report, and the supervisor shall document that such report has been made.

Under no circumstances shall any supervisor or administrator exercise any control, restraint, modification, delay or other such change in the report or the forwarding of such reports to DCFS. Further, under the provisions of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, employers cannot discriminate in any manner against employees who made good faith reports of suspected child abuse or neglect or who act as witnesses to testify in any investigation or proceeding concerning a report of child abuse or neglect.

Definitions

Abused Child

An abused child is one whose parent or immediate family member, or any person responsible for the child's welfare, or any individual residing in the same home as the child, or any paramour of the child's parent:

1. inflicts, causes to be inflicted or allows to be inflicted, physical injury by other than accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;

2. creates a substantial risk of physical injury to the child by other than accidental means which would be likely to cause death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;
3. commits or allows to be committed any sexual offense against such child, including all sexual acts, fondling a child, or having the child touch the person in a sexual manner;
4. commits or allows to be committed an act or acts of torture upon such child;
5. inflicts excessive corporal punishment; or
6. causes an illegal controlled substance to be sold, transferred, distributed or given to a child.

Neglected Child

A neglected child is any child who is not receiving the proper or necessary nourishment or medically indicated treatment including food or care, or otherwise is not receiving the necessary support or medical or other remedial care or other care necessary for his or her well-being, including adequate food, clothing or shelter; or who is abandoned by his or her parents or other person responsible for the child's welfare. Neglect may also include failure to provide adequate supervision to a child, such as when a child is left unsupervised or left in the care of someone incapable.

Procedures for Reporting Abuse and/or Neglect

1. Upon receiving a report of suspected abuse and/or neglect, a staff member must report the suspected abuse and/or neglect to the school social worker or building principal. Regardless of whether the social worker or principal is available, the staff member must make a report of the abuse and/or neglect personally and immediately by phone to the DCFS Hotline. While a staff member may initially question the student to gather facts about the alleged abuse or neglect, validation of suspected child abuse or neglect is the responsibility of DCFS, who may be assisted by the local police department. Any doubt about reporting a case of suspected abuse or neglect is to be resolved in favor of the child and the report made immediately. The report shall include, if known, the name and address of the child and his parents or other persons having custody; the child's age; the nature of the child's condition including evidence of any previous injuries or disabilities; and any other information that the person filing the report believes would be helpful in establishing the cause of such abuse or neglect and the identity of the person(s) believed to have caused such abuse or neglect. If the reporting staff member suspects that the child's safety is in jeopardy, he/she should also contact the local police department immediately.

2. The telephone report must be verified in writing within 48 hours, by completing DCFS Form entitled "Written Confirmation of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect Report: Mandated Reporters." Copies of the written report shall be sent to the following:
 - a. Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Attention: Child Protective Services, 406 East Monroe Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701;
 - b. The social worker assigned to the student's building; and
 - c. The keeper of the records for the student's building, in order that the form be inserted in the student's temporary record.
3. The school social worker or the principal will have the responsibility of notifying the student's parents or guardian that an incident of child abuse or neglect has been reported to the Department of Children and Family Services. An exception to this rule may be a case where, in the judgment of the social worker and the principal, such a disclosure to the parents would create a threat to the well-being of the child. In such cases the social worker and the principal will jointly determine a follow-up procedure which will insure intervention by an appropriate social agency or the police.
4. The school personnel involved in reporting a case of suspected child abuse and neglect, in conjunction with the building principal or social worker, shall cooperate with investigating government agencies. School personnel must verify each investigator's identification before providing information regarding the alleged case of child abuse and/or neglect.
5. If local DCFS officials do not contact the principal or social worker within 48 hours of the initial telephone report, the principal or social worker shall call the local DCFS office at (630) 790-6800 to confirm that such report has been received and inquire regarding the status of the investigation.

Discipline

Any District employee who fails to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect in accordance with this policy shall be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

Any District employee who is determined after an investigation to have engaged in physical or sexual abuse of a child in his or her care will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Any student of the District who is determined after an investigation to have engaged in physical or sexual abuse will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension and expulsion from school.

In addition, the District shall discipline any employee who retaliates against any person who, in good faith, has reported suspected child abuse and/or neglect or who testifies, assists, or participates in any investigation, hearing, or proceeding relating to such allegations.

LEGAL REF: 325 ILCS 5/1 et seq.

CROSS REF: 5.20 (Sexual Harassment), 5.100 (Staff Development Program), 7.20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7.150 (Agency and Police Interviews)

Adopted: May 10, 2006