Abused and Neglected Child Reporting

Any District employee who suspects or receives knowledge that a student may be an abused or neglected child or, for a student aged 18 through 21, an abused or neglected individual with a disability, shall: (1) immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) on its Child Abuse Hotline 800/25-ABUSE or 217/524-2606, and (2) follow directions given by DCFS concerning filing a written report within 48 hours with the nearest DCFS field office. The employee shall also promptly notify the Superintendent or Building Principal that a report has been made. The Superintendent or Building Principal shall immediately coordinate any necessary notifications to the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) with DCFS, the applicable school resource officer (SRO), and/or local law enforcement.

Any District employee who discovers child pornography on electronic and information technology equipment shall immediately report it to local law enforcement, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children’s CyberTipline 800/843-5678, or online at www.cybertipline.com. The Superintendent or Building Principal shall also be promptly notified of the discovery and that a report has been made.

Any District employee who observes any act of hazing that does bodily harm to a student must report that act to the Building Principal, Superintendent, or designee who will investigate and take appropriate action. If the hazing results in death or great bodily harm, the employee must first make the report to law enforcement and then to the Superintendent or Building Principal. Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act directed to or required of a student for the purpose of being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any group, organization, club, or athletic team whose members are or include other students.

Definitions

Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA), School Code, and Erin’s Law Training

The Superintendent or designee shall provide staff development opportunities for District employees in the detection, reporting, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

All District employees shall:

1. Before beginning employment, sign the Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status form provided by DCFS. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the signed forms are retained.

2. Complete mandated reporter training as required by law within one year of initial employment and at least every 5 years after that date.

The Superintendent will encourage all District educators to complete continuing professional development that addresses the traits and identifiers that may be evident in students who are victims of child sexual abuse, including recognizing and reporting child sexual abuse and
providing appropriate follow-up and care for abused students as they return to the classroom setting.

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:


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.

Special Superintendent Responsibilities

The Superintendent shall execute the requirements in Board policy 5:150, Personnel Records, whenever another school district requests a reference concerning an applicant who is or was a District employee and was the subject of a report made by a District employee to DCFS.

The Superintendent shall notify the State Superintendent and the Regional Superintendent in writing when he or she has reasonable cause to believe that a license holder was dismissed or resigned from the District as a result of an act that made a child an abused or neglected child. The Superintendent must make the report within 30 days of the dismissal or resignation and mail a copy of the notification to the license holder.

Special School Board Member Responsibilities

Each individual Board member must, if an allegation is raised to the member during an open or closed Board meeting that a student is an abused child as defined in the Act, direct or cause the Board to direct the Superintendent or other equivalent school administrator to comply with the Act’s requirements concerning the reporting of child abuse.
LEGAL REF:

105 ILCS 5/10-21.9.
    20 ILCS 1305/1-1 et seq.
    20 ILCS 2435/.
    325 ILCS 5/.
    720 ILCS 5/12C-50.1.

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

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