

Child Protective Service Procedures Child Abuse/Neglect

It is the duty of all district personnel to report every instance of suspected child abuse or neglect. Sample indicators of abuse and neglect are listed below, however, since protection of children is the paramount concern, staff members should discuss any suspicious circumstance with the Principal or school nurse regardless of whether the condition is listed among the sample indicators.

Staff members are reminded that it is their legal obligation to make such reports and that the law frees them from potential liability for doing so.

Reporting Procedure

The following procedures are to be used in reporting instances of suspected child abuse:

Staff members shall report instances of possible abuse or neglect to the Principal. In his or her absence the report shall be made to the school nurse or counselor.

If feasible, the Principal, school nurse, or counselor shall interview the child to find out if there seems to be a reasonable explanation of the condition or circumstances.

1. If there is a reasonable likelihood of abuse or neglect the Principal, nurse or counselor shall immediately phone a report to the nearest office of the Child Protective Services. If that recourse is unavailable, the report shall be made to the local police. It is the authorities' responsibility to establish the fact of child abuse or neglect. At times, however, school personnel may wish to discuss the circumstances with a staff member of Child Protective Services for assistance in determining if a report should be made.
2. When there is reasonable cause to believe that a student has suffered abuse or neglect and the principal, nurse or counselor are unavailable staff shall immediately contact the nearest office of the child protective services (CPS). Staff are encouraged to report the incident to their building principal.
3. A written report shall be submitted promptly to the agency to which the phone report was made. The report shall include:
 - a) Name of child, address and birthdate;
 - b) Name and address of the parent/guardian, work and home phone;
 - c) Nature and extent of the suspected abuse or neglect;

- d) Any evidence of previous abuse or any other information that may relate to the cause or extent of the abuse or neglect.

Sample Indicators of Observable Abuse of a Child

1. Bilateral bruises, extensive bruises, bruises of different ages, patterns of bruises caused by a particular instrument (belt buckle, wire, straight edge, coat hanger, etc.)
2. Burn patterns consistent with forces immersion in a hot liquid (a distinct boundary line where the burn stops), burn patterns consistent with the spattering by hot liquids, patterns caused by a particular kind of implement (electric iron, etc.) or instrument (circular cigarette burns, etc.)
3. Lacerations, welts, abrasions.
4. Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child.
5. Injuries inconsistent with the child's age.
6. Sexual abuse, whether physical injuries are sustained or not, is any act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation, including but not limited to incest, rape, carnal knowledge, sodomy or unnatural or perverted sexual practices.
Indicators include:
 - a. Child having difficulty sitting down;
 - b. Child refusing to change into gym clothes (when she/he has been willing to change clothes in the past)
 - c. Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint about what is wrong at home;
 - d. Young child daydreaming to an excessive degree, almost out of touch;
 - e. Child dropping lots of questions on school nurse about how pregnancy occurs.

Sample Indicators of Observable Neglect of a Child

1. Malnourished, ill-clad, dirty, without proper shelter or sleeping arrangements, lacking appropriate health care;
2. Unattended, without adequate supervision;
3. Ill and lacking essential health care;
4. Denies normal experiences that produce feelings of being loved, wanted, secure (emotional neglect);

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5. Irregular school attendance;
6. Exploited, overworked,
7. Emotionally disturbed due to continuous friction in the home, marital discord, mentally ill parents;
8. Abandoned.

Note: the above examples do not prove that abuse or neglect has actually occurred, but provide evidence for further investigation.