

Policy

BOARD OF EDUCATION
HORTONVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The Board is concerned with the physical and mental well-being of all children of this District and will cooperate in the identification and reporting of cases of child abuse or neglect in accordance with law. In addition, the Board strictly prohibits any actual or threatened acts of physical, mental, sexual, or other form of abuse directed towards students by any person in any District-owned, operated, or leased facility, or at any school-sponsored activity.

Staff Training Required

The Board shall require every employee to receive training provided by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in identifying children who have been abused or neglected and, in the laws, and procedures detailed herein governing the reporting of suspected or threatened child abuse and neglect. Such training shall be completed within the first three (3) months of employment in the District and at least once every five (5) years after the initial training. The training may be held in conjunction with staff training for threats of violence as required by Policy #8462.01 – Threats of Violence.

Training conducted in fulfillment of this policy shall include a record of the date, time, duration, and content of the training, as well as a list of all attendees at the training.

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Each District employee who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring, or has reasonable cause to believe a child has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect is likely to occur, shall be responsible for reporting immediately every case, whether verified or suspected, the circumstances giving rise to the reasonable cause.

Reporting is mandatory even if the staff member has reason to believe that the abuse or neglect occurred, but is no longer occurring (for example, the child is no longer living with the suspected abuser). Staff members should make reports based on reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect and are not permitted to first investigate the circumstances in an effort to verify abuse or neglect. This can cause a loss of time and jeopardize law enforcement or social services investigations into child welfare concerns.

Reporting Procedures

The employee shall immediately call the local office of the Child Welfare Department, or local law enforcement agency.

Employees shall also notify the building level administrator or the District Administrator.

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The identity of the reporting person shall be confidential, subject only to disclosure by consent or court order. A reporting employee shall not be dismissed or otherwise penalized for making a report of child abuse or neglect, unless such report was made knowing it to be false and for the purpose of harming the accused or victim in the report.

Information concerning alleged child abuse is confidential. Any unauthorized disclosure by an official or employee of the District is a violation of the law and may subject the disseminator to civil liability for resulting damages and disciplinary action.

Each principal should be mindful of the possibility of physical or mental abuse being inflicted on a student by an employee. Any such instances, whether real or alleged, should be dealt with in accordance with the administrative guidelines established by the District Administrator. Staff member reporting obligations under this policy and applicable law are the same regardless of whether the suspected abuser is a parent, guardian, or another staff member, and reports should be made accordingly.

Legal References:

49.981, Wis. Stats.

118.07(5), Wis. Stats.

175.32, Wis. Stats.

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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROCEDURE

ABUSE (physical abuse, emotional damage, and sexual abuse) and NEGLECT (failure, refusal or inability on the part of a caregiver for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child (Wis. Stat 48.02-12g).

1. All district employees are mandated reporters.
2. If there is suspected abuse or neglect, the mandated reporter must **immediately** (no time delay or waiting for a free period) call Child Welfare Department or local law enforcement (Wis. Stat 48.981 (2)(a)1). If an administrator is available to assist in the reporting process **immediately**, the phone call can be made with both the teacher and administrator present.
3. The reporter should report the following information:
 - Reporter's name, position, school, school phone number
 - If known, where the abuse or neglect occurred
 - Child's name, address, and age
 - Report's relationship to the child
 - Parent's name, address, work place (if applicable)
 - Names and ages of siblings
 - Description of the suspected child abuse or neglect (or the threat of child abuse or neglect), statements made by the child, statements the child allegedly made to others, observations of the child that may indicate child abuse or neglect, past interactions with the parents or other caretakers that might be indicative of child abuse or neglect
4. The mandated reporter will then notify the building principals the same day of the child's name and suspected abuse, if the principal was not part of the original phone call.
5. State law provides a variety of protections to people who make reports of suspected abuse or neglect in good faith. All reports of suspected abuse or neglect are confidential. Anyone who, in good faith, reports suspected abuse or neglect is immune from both criminal and civil liability. No person may be discharged, discipline, or otherwise discriminated against in regard to employment. (48.9981(2)).
6. Once the report is made, the reporter is not responsible for anything further.
7. After the reported incident, if additional information is known about suspected child abuse or neglect, the staff member is required to report this again.