

Personnel

General Personnel - Abused and Neglected Child Reporting

The Board of Education is committed to the belief that every child has a right to grow and develop to the best of his/her ability in a school, home, work and play environment free from mental or physical abuse and neglect. Accordingly, all District personnel shall comply fully with the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (Act). 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.

Any employee having reasonable cause to believe a child, known to the employee in his professional or official capacity, may be an abused or neglected child shall immediately report or cause a report to be made in confidence to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and to the Superintendent.

Neither the Superintendent nor any other School District administrator may, in any instance, change any report of child abuse or neglect made by an employee to DCFS or make any attempt to interfere in the making of a report to DCFS.

Reports to DCFS shall be made by telephone to the Central Register which may be contacted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 800-252-2873, 800-25A-BUSE or 217-524-2606. In making a report to DCFS a school employee shall include, if known:

1. the name and address of the child and his/her parents or other persons having custody;
2. the child's age;
3. the nature of the child's condition, including any evidence of previous injuries or disabilities;
4. any other information which might be helpful in establishing the cause of such abuse or neglect or the identity of the person believed to have caused such abuse or neglect.

The reporting requirements contained in this Policy shall apply to all employees, including psychologists, social workers and other persons who may be parties to otherwise privileged communications. Traditional considerations of confidentiality shall not constitute grounds for failure to report. Any employee hired on or after July 1, 1986 shall sign a statement on a form prescribed by DCFS, providing that the employee has knowledge and understanding of the reporting requirements of the Act. The Superintendent shall provide the appropriate form. The signed statement shall be retained by the District.

The Illinois School Code provides for the possible suspension of a teacher's certificate for up to one calendar year by the regional superintendent or up to five calendar years by the State Superintendent of Education for willful failure to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Act.

In accordance with the Act, it shall be the policy of the District that DCFS shall be responsible for investigation of suspected cases of abuse and neglect beyond the initial reports.

Employees are advised that Illinois law provides immunity from any liability, civil, criminal or otherwise that might result by reason of making a good faith report of an abused or neglected child or participating in an investigation of such report. However, an employee should never take a child into his or her own custody without specific directions from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Any employee who makes or investigates a report under the Act shall be obligated to testify in any legal proceeding resulting from such report.

Any employee making a report or given access to the names or other information identifying the subjects of the report shall not disclose such identifying information except as may be required by the Act.

Access to children by officials of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services or other non-school personnel during school hours shall be arranged through and approved by the Superintendent.

District personnel shall not disclose the whereabouts of any child who has been removed from school premises and taken into protective custody as a victim of suspected child abuse, except as may be required by law. Inquiries concerning such a child shall be directed to the DCFS or to local law enforcement personnel where appropriate.

If an employee of the District who comes into frequent contact with children has been named as a perpetrator in an "indicated" report filed under the Act, the Superintendent shall so notify the State Board of Education, the Board of Education of the District, and the principal of the school where the employee serves.

A written summary of all child abuse or neglect reports should be filed and maintained in confidence in the District Administrative Office.

LEGAL REF.: Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/1 et seq.); and Illinois School Code, Sec. 10-21.4, 21-23, and 10-22.6b (105 ILCS 5/10-21.4, 5/21-23, and 5/10-22.6b).

Adopted: October 9, 1997
Reviewed: April 24, 2003
Revised: January 27, 2011