

STUDENT WELFARE

Code **JLF** Issued **3/13**

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for the reporting of child abuse.

Any principal, assistant principal, school teacher, nurse, attendance officer or counselor who has received information in his/her professional capacity which gives him/her reason to believe that the physical or mental health or welfare of a child under the age of 18 has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must report such a situation. The principal, assistant principal, teacher, nurse, attendance officer or counselor may make the report to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides or to the county department of social services as consistent with school procedures.

Other school employees who have reason to believe that a child under the age of 18 has been subjected to, or who may be subjected to, physical abuse or neglect, may also report or cause a report to be made as stated above as consistent with school procedures.

The State of South Carolina provides both civil and criminal immunity to those reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. Anyone required to report who knowingly fails to do so may be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Reporting procedures

School personnel who suspect child abuse or neglect may make a report in good faith. It is not the responsibility of the school personnel to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, or to make a determination of whether the child is in need of protection. Any involvement of school personnel in investigation or treatment should be in conjunction with the local child protection unit of the department of social services.

School employees who make child abuse or neglect reports must maintain the confidentiality of the information contained in the report. Employees will release this information only to the department of social services or, in the alternative, the county law enforcement agency.

Adopted 1/4/82; Revised 10/5/98; 10/4/10; Issued 3/4/13

Legal references:

- A. S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:
 - 1. Section 20-7-10 et seq. – Children’s Code.
 - 2. Section 20-7-510 – Persons to report.