



Propel Schools
Child Abuse Policy

Purpose

Propel Schools requires all employees, independent contractors and volunteers to comply with identification and reporting requirements for suspected child abuse, as well as the training requirement for recognition and reporting of child abuse in order to comply with the Child Protective Services Law and the PA School Code.

Definitions

The following words and phrases, when used in this policy, shall have the meaning given to them in this section:

Adult - an individual eighteen (18) years of age or older.

Bodily injury - impairment of physical condition or substantial pain.

Certifications - refers to the child abuse history clearance statement and state and federal criminal history background checks required by the Child Protective Services Law and/or the School Code.

Child - an individual under eighteen (18) years of age.

Child abuse - intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:

1. Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
2. Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
3. Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act.
4. Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.
5. Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
6. Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.
7. Causing serious physical neglect of a child.
8. Engaging in any of the following recent acts:



- a. Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
- b. Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.
- c. Forcefully shaking a child under one (1) year of age.
- d. Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one (1) year of age.
- e. Interfering with the breathing of a child.
- f. Causing a child to be present at a location while a violation of 18 Pa. C.S. Section 7508.2 (relating to operation of a methamphetamine laboratory) is occurring, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.
- g. Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the actor knows or reasonably should have known: (i) is required to register as a Tier II or Tier III sexual offender under 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 97 Subch. H (relating to registration of sexual offenders), where the victim of the sexual offense was under 18 years of age when the crime was committed; (ii) has been determined to be a sexually violent predator under 42 Pa.C.S. Section 9799.24 (relating to assessments) or any of its predecessors; ; (iii) has been determined to be a sexually violent delinquent child as defined in 42 Pa.C.S. Section 9799.58 (relating to definitions); (iv) has been determined to be a sexually violent predator under 42 Pa.C.S. Section 9799.58 (relating to assessments) or has to register for life under 42 Pa.C.S. Section 9799.55(b) (relating to registration).
9. Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.
10. Engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined under section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

Participation in events that involve physical contact with child. An individual participating in a practice or competition in an interscholastic sport, physical education, a recreational activity or an extracurricular activity that involves physical contact with a child does not, in itself, constitute contact that is subject to the reporting requirements pursuant to this policy.



Use of force for supervision, control and safety purposes: The use of reasonable force on or against a child by a person responsible for the child's welfare shall not be considered child abuse if any of the following conditions apply:

1. The use of reasonable force constitutes incidental, minor or reasonable physical contact in order to maintain order and control;
2. The use of reasonable force is necessary: (i) to quell a disturbance or remove a child from the scene of a disturbance that threatens physical injury to persons or damage to property; (ii) to prevent the child from self-inflicted physical harm; (iii) for self-defense or the defense of another individual; or (iv) to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects or controlled substances or paraphernalia that are on the child or within the control of the child.

Direct contact with children - the care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children.

Independent contractor - an individual other than a school employee who provides a program, activity or service who is otherwise responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or control of children pursuant to a contract. The term does not apply to administrative or other support personnel unless the administrative or other support personnel have direct contact with children.

Perpetrator - a person who has committed child abuse as defined in this policy. (1) The term includes only the following: (i) A parent of the child; (ii) A spouse or former spouse of the child's parent; (iii) A paramour or former paramour of the child's parent; (iv) A person 14 years of age or older and responsible for the child's welfare or having direct contact with children as an employee of child-care services, a school or through a program, activity or service; (v) An individual 14 years of age or older who resides in the same home as the child; (vi) An individual 18 years of age or older who does not reside in the same home as the child but is related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity by birth or adoption to the child; (vii) An individual 18 years of age or older who engages a child in severe forms of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined under section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

(2) Only the following may be considered a perpetrator for failing to act, as provided in this policy: (i) A parent of the child; (ii) A spouse or former spouse of the child's parent; (iii) A paramour or former paramour of the child's parent; (iv) A person 18 years of age



or older and responsible for the child's welfare; (v) A person 18 years of age or older who resides in the same home as the child.

Person responsible for the child's welfare - a person who provides permanent or temporary care, supervision, mental health diagnosis or treatment, training or control of a child in lieu of parental care, supervision and control.

Program, activity or service - any of the following in which children participate and which is sponsored by a school or a public or private organization:

1. A youth camp or program.
2. A recreational camp or program.
3. A sports or athletic program.
4. A community or social outreach program.
5. An enrichment or educational program.
6. A troop, club or similar organization.

Recent act or failure to act - any act or failure to act committed within two (2) years of the date of the report to the Department of Human Services of the Commonwealth or county agency.

Routine interaction - regular and repeated contact that is integral to a person's employment or volunteer responsibilities.

School employee - an individual who is employed by a school or who provides a program, activity or service sponsored by a school. The term does not apply to administrative or other support personnel unless the administrative or other support personnel have direct contact with children.

Serious mental injury - a psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment, that:

1. Renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened; or
2. Seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.



Serious physical neglect - any of the following when committed by a perpetrator that endangers a child's life or health, threatens a child's well-being, causes bodily injury or impairs a child's health, development or functioning:

1. A repeated, prolonged or egregious failure to supervise a child in a manner that is appropriate considering the child's developmental age and abilities.
2. The failure to provide a child with adequate essentials of life, including food, shelter or medical care.

Sexual abuse or exploitation - any of the following:

1. The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in sexually explicit conduct, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Looking at the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or another individual for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire in any individual.
 - b. Participating in sexually explicit conversation either in person, by telephone, by computer or by a computer-aided device for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
 - c. Actual or simulated sexual activity or nudity for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
 - d. Actual or simulated sexual activity for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming.

The conduct described above does not include consensual activities between a child who is fourteen (14) years of age or older and another person who is fourteen (14) years of age or older and whose age is within four (4) years of the child's age.

2. Any of the following offenses committed against a child: rape (18 Pa.C.S. Section 3121); statutory sexual assault (18 Pa.C.S. Section 3122.1); involuntary deviate sexual intercourse (18 Pa.C.S. Section 3123); sexual assault (18 Pa.C.S. Section 3124.1); institutional sexual assault (18 Pa.C.S. Section 3124.2); aggravated indecent assault (18 Pa.C.S. Section 3125); indecent assault (18 Pa.C.S. Section 3126); indecent exposure (18 Pa.C.S. Section 3127); incest (18 Pa.C.S. Section 4302); prostitution (18 Pa.C.S. Section 5902); sexual abuse (18 Pa.C.S. Section



6312); unlawful contact with a minor (18 Pa.C.S. Section 6318); or sexual exploitation (18 Pa.C.S. Section 6320).

Student - an individual enrolled in a public or private school, intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school who is under eighteen (18) years of age.

Volunteer - an unpaid adult individual, who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service is a person responsible for the child's welfare or has direct contact with children.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall require each candidate for employment or volunteer to submit an official child abuse clearance statement and state and federal criminal history background checks (certifications) as required by law.

School employees, independent contractors, volunteers shall obtain and submit new certifications every sixty (60) months.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify staff, independent contractors, and volunteers of their responsibility for reporting child abuse in accordance with Board policy and administrative regulations.

Human Resources shall ensure that the poster, developed by the PA Department of Education, displaying the statewide toll-free telephone numbers for reporting suspected child abuse, neglect and school safety issues be posted in a high-traffic, public area of each school. The designated area shall be readily accessible and widely used by students.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually inform students, parents/guardians, independent contractors, volunteers and staff regarding the contents of this Board policy.

Guidelines

Aiding and Abetting Sexual Abuse

School employees, acting in an official capacity for Propel Schools, are prohibited from assisting another school employee, contractor or agent in obtaining a new job if the school employee knows, or has probable cause to believe, that such school employee, contractor or agent engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student.



This prohibition applies only to assistance that extends beyond performance of normal processing of personnel matters including routine transmission of files or other information. This prohibition shall not apply if:

1. The relevant information has been properly reported to law enforcement officials and any other authority required by federal, state or local law and the matter has been officially closed or the prosecutor or law enforcement officials notified school officials that there is insufficient information to establish probable cause.
2. The school employee, contractor or agent has been acquitted or otherwise exonerated of the alleged misconduct.
3. The case or investigation remains open and no charges have been filed against, or indictment of, the school employee, contractor or agent within four (4) years of the date on which the information was reported to the law enforcement agency.

Training

Propel Schools shall provide their employees and independent contractors who have direct contact with children with mandatory training on child abuse recognition and reporting. The training shall include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

1. Recognition of the signs of abuse and sexual misconduct and reporting requirements for suspected abuse and sexual misconduct.
2. Provisions of the Educator Discipline Act, including mandatory reporting requirements.
3. Policy related to reporting of suspected abuse and sexual misconduct.
4. Maintenance of professional and appropriate relationships with students.

Employees are required to complete a minimum of three (3) hours of training every five (5) years.

Duty to Report



School employees, independent contractors and volunteers shall make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

1. The school employee, independent contractor or volunteer comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and the practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
2. The school employee, independent contractor or volunteer is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.
3. A person makes a specific disclosure to a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
4. An individual fourteen (14) years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer that s/he has committed child abuse.

A child is not required to come before the school employee, independent contractor or volunteer in order for that individual to make a report of suspected child abuse.

A report of suspected child abuse does not require the identification of the person responsible for the child abuse.

Any person who, in good faith, makes a report of suspected child abuse, regardless of whether the report is required, cooperates with an investigation, testifies in a proceeding, or engages in other action authorized by law shall have immunity from civil and criminal liability related to those actions.

Any person required to report child abuse who willfully fails to do so may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

Any person who intentionally or knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or intentionally or knowingly induces a child to make a false claim of child abuse may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

Any person who engages in intimidation, retaliation, or obstruction in the making of a child abuse report or the conducting of an investigation into suspected child abuse may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

Propel Schools shall not discriminate or retaliate against any person for making, in good faith, a report of suspected child abuse.



Reporting Procedures

School employees, independent contractors or volunteers who suspect child abuse shall immediately make a written report of suspected child abuse using electronic technologies (www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis) or an oral report via the statewide toll-free telephone number (1-800-932-0313). A person making an initial oral report of suspected child abuse must also submit a written electronic report within forty-eight (48) hours after the oral report. Upon receipt of an electronic report, the electronic reporting system will automatically respond with a confirmation, providing a written record of the report.

A school employee, independent contractor or volunteer who makes a report of suspected child abuse shall immediately, after making the initial report, notify the building principal or administrator and if the initial report was made electronically, also provide the building principal or administrator with a copy of the report confirmation. The building principal or administrator shall then immediately notify the Superintendent or designee that a child abuse report has been made and if the initial report was made electronically, also provide a copy of the report confirmation.

When a report of suspected child abuse is made by a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer as required by law, Propel Schools is not required to make more than one (1) report. An individual otherwise required to make a report who is aware that an initial report has already been made by a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer is not required to make an additional report. The person making an initial oral report is responsible for making the follow-up written electronic report within forty-eight (48) hours, and shall provide the building principal or administrator with a copy of the report confirmation promptly after the written electronic report has been filed. The building principal or administrator shall in turn provide a copy of the report confirmation to the Superintendent or designee.

If the Superintendent or designee reasonably suspects that conduct being reported involves an incident required to be reported under the Safe Schools Act, the Superintendent or designee shall inform local law enforcement, in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.



Investigation

The building principal or administrator shall facilitate cooperation with the Department of Human Services of the Commonwealth or the county agency investigating a report of suspected child abuse, including permitting authorized personnel to interview the child while in attendance at school.

Upon notification that an investigation involves suspected child abuse by a school employee, the building principal or administrator shall immediately implement a plan of supervision or alternative arrangement that has been approved by the Superintendent for the school employee under investigation. The plan of supervision or alternative arrangement shall be submitted to the county agency for approval.

Approved By	
Dr. Tina Chekan	Date 6/12/23
Board of Trustees	Date 6/12/23