

Child Abuse Or Neglect

North Dakota Century Code 50-25.1-03 mandates that schoolteachers, administrators, and school counselors having knowledge of or reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected shall report the circumstances to the appropriate social services agency.

All employees of the Fargo Public Schools shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in the fulfillment of this law.

1. Any teacher or staff member who has knowledge of or reason to suspect child abuse or neglect shall immediately submit an oral and/or written report (using SFN 960 form) to be made to the Statewide Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Line at 1-833-958-3500. Supporting documents can be provided to the CPS Intake Unit by fax: 701-328-0361. Oral reports must be followed by a written report within forty-eight hours if requested by the Department of Social Services. A written report must include any information specifically sought by the agency if the reporter possesses or has reasonable access to that information.
2. Representatives of Social Services or law enforcement agencies shall be permitted to interview the subject of a report at the school. The representative of the agency shall notify the school principal of the intent to conduct an interview on school property. The school administrator may not disclose the nature of the notification or any other related information concerning the interview to any person including a person responsible for the child's welfare. The school administrator and agency representative shall make every effort to reduce the disruption of the educational program of the child, other students or school staff when an interview is conducted on school property.
3. In order to protect the child, it is recommended that any contact with the parents or guardian of the child should originate with the social services agency.
4. In an emergency or critical situation, the protection of the child from further harm is paramount. In these situations, the law enforcement officials should be called in to protect the child. The report then becomes a secondary consideration.
5. Any person, other than the alleged violator, participating in good faith in making the report, assistant in an investigation, furnishing information to an investigator, or in providing protective services under this chapter, is immune from any liability civil or criminal, that otherwise might result from reporting the alleged case of abuse or neglect.
6. All reports, as well as any other information obtained, regarding child abuse and neglect are confidential and must be available in accordance with state law..
7. Any person who permits or encourages the unauthorized disclosure of reports made or confidential information obtained under the provisions of this law is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.
8. Any person who willfully makes a false report, or provides false information which causes a report to be made under the law, is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor unless the

false report is made to a law enforcement official, in which case the person who causes the false report to be made is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. A person, who willfully makes a false report or willfully provides information that causes a report to be made, is also liable in a civil action for all damages suffered by the person reported, including exemplary damages.

9. Any person who is required to make a report and fails to do so is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

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