Needs Updated

Policy: 3421P
Section: 3000 - Students

Procedure Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Prevention

Each school principal will develop and implement an instructional program that will teach students:

1. How to recognize the factors that may cause people to abuse, neglect, or exploit children;
2. How one may protect oneself from incurring these forms of maltreatment; and
3. What resources are available to assist an individual who does or may encounter an abusive situation.

To facilitate such a program, staff development activities may include such topics as:

1. Child growth and development;
2. Identification of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation;
3. Effects of child maltreatment on child growth and development;
4. Personal safety as it relates to potential child abuse, neglect, and exploitation;
5. Parenting and supervision skills;
6. Life situations/stressors which may lead to child maltreatment; or
7. Substance abuse.

Reporting Responsibilities

Staff are expected to report every instance of suspected child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Since protection of children is the paramount concern, staff should discuss any suspected evidence with the principal, nurse, or supervisor regardless of whether the condition is listed among the indicators of abuse or neglect.

Staff are reminded of their obligation as district employees to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Professional staff are reminded of their legal obligation to report these incidents. Staff are also reminded of their immunity from potential liability for doing so. The following procedures are to be used in reporting instances of suspected child abuse, neglect, or exploitation:

A. When there is reasonable cause to believe that a student has suffered abuse, neglect, or exploitation, staff or the principal will immediately contact the nearest office of the Child Protective Services (CPS) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). If the situation is urgent and CPS cannot immediately respond, staff shall immediately contact the local law enforcement agency. This contact must be made within forty-eight (48) hours.

   Staff will also advise the principal or supervisor regarding instances of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation as well as reports that have been made to CPS or law enforcement. In his/her absence, the report will be made to the nurse or counselor.

A staff member may contact CPS to determine if a report should be made. Child Protective Services has the responsibility of determining the fact of child abuse or neglect. Any doubt about the child's condition will be resolved in favor of making the report.

B. A written report will be submitted promptly to the agency to which the report was made. The report will include:

1. The name, address and age of the child;

2. The name and address of the parent or person having custody of the child;

3. The nature and extent of the suspected abuse or neglect;

4. Any evidence of previous abuse or any other information that may relate to the cause or extent of the abuse or neglect; and

5. The identity, if known, of the person accused of inflicting the abuse.

C. When the district receives a report that a school employee has committed an act of sexual misconduct, it will notify the parents of the alleged victim within forty-eight (48) hours.

Abuse Indicators

Physical abuse indicators:

1. Bilateral bruises, extensive bruises, bruises of different ages, patterns of bruises caused by a particular instrument (belt buckle, wire, straight edge, coat hanger, etc.) or unreasonable use of force (grabbing, pinching, dragging, and/or other unapproved forms of restraint);

2. Burn patterns consistent with forced immersion in a hot liquid (a distinct boundary line where the burn stops), burn patterns consistent with a spattering by hot liquids, patterns caused by a particular kind of implement (electric iron, etc.) or instrument (circular cigarette burns, etc.);

3. Lacerations, welts, abrasions;

4. Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child;

5. Injuries inconsistent with the child's age; or

6. Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation.

Emotional Abuse Indicators:

1. Lags in physical development;

2. Extreme behavior disorder;

3. Fearfulness of adults or authority figures; or

4. Revelations of highly inappropriate adult behavior, i.e., being enclosed in a dark closet, forced to drink or eat inedible items.

Sexual Abuse Indicators
Sexual abuse, whether physical injuries are sustained or not, is any act or acts involving intentional sexual contact, conduct, or communication with a child. Beyond direct evidence of this kind of abuse, indicators may include, but are not limited to:

1. A child's developmentally inappropriate sexual conduct, regardless of the child's own mental status or development;

2. Child engaging in "sex talk", drawings, or attempting to access pornography;

3. Child's disclosure of "grooming behaviors" or inappropriate conduct that does not necessarily rise to a specific sexual act;

4. An adult's attempt to form a secret or unreasonably special relationship with a child;

5. Venereal disease in a child of any age;

6. Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital or anal areas; or

7. Pregnancy.

Physical Neglect Indicators

1. Lack of basic needs (food, clothing, safety, shelter);

2. Inadequate supervision;

3. Lack of essential health care and high incidence of illness;

4. Poor hygiene on a regular basis;

5. Inappropriate clothing in inclement weather; or

6. Abandonment.

Some Behavioral Indicators of Abuse:

1. Wary of adult contact;

2. Frightened of parents;

3. Afraid to go home;

4. Habitually truant or late to school;

5. Arrives at school early and remains after school later than other students;

6. Wary of physical contact by adults;

7. Shows evidence of overall poor care;

8. Parents or caretakers describe child as "difficult" or "bad;"

9. Inappropriately dressed for the weather — no coat or shoes in cold weather or long sleeves and high necklines in hot weather (possibly hiding marks of abuse); or

10. Exhibit behavioral extremes: crying often or never, unusually aggressive or withdrawn and fearful.

NOTE: Indicators in and of themselves do not necessarily prove that abuse, neglect, or exploitation has occurred. However, they still may warrant a referral to CPS or law enforcement. When in doubt, staff should consult with CPS about making a report.

Child abuse as defined by the statutes can be inflicted "by any person" and may include student-on-student abuse. These cases also require reporting to CPS or law enforcement.

Adoption Date: October 21, 2015
Classification:
Revised Dates: **10.98; 02.07; 4.07; 08.08; 04.10; 12.11; 12.13; 6.15**