AR-5141.4 (a)

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

1. If District personnel have reasonable cause to suspect, because of information learned in the course of their employment, that an instance of child abuse or neglect has come to their attention, the information shall immediately (as soon as possible, and within 24 hours) be reported to the nearest office of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. The initial contact should be made by phone, followed by a written report submitted electronically or via fax if requested. If the reporter cannot reach an employee of the agency and immediate action is needed to protect the child's wellbeing, the report shall be made to a peace officer.

2. As soon as possible after reporting to the state agency, a report should be made to the building principal using a form that has been created for this purpose and which will thereafter be maintained in a confidential file. A copy of the Suspected Child Abuse Report form is attached (*Exhibit 5141.4).* The principal should make the superintendent aware that a report has been submitted.

3. Upon contact from the Department, district personnel will cooperate fully with the Department's investigation and will make available any information in the District's possession that is necessary to aid that investigation to the full extent permitted under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and state law.

4. District personnel shall not require a child to discuss an incident of abuse or neglect, nor shall district personnel conduct investigations of suspected abuse or neglect before making reports to the Department. If a victim of abuse or neglect initiates discussion of an incident, district personnel should permit the victim to discuss the incident to the extent the victim wishes to do so.

5. The legal duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect cannot be delegated to someone else. Reporting to a building principal or other District employee does not relieve a mandatory reporter from the obligation to make a report to the Department of Health and Social Services. No person who makes a report in good faith shall be subject to any sanction or retaliation.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

6. Reports concerning incidents of suspected abuse and neglect are confidential. District personnel access to information relating to such reports shall be restricted to individuals with a need to know the information for reporting compliance or other legitimate educational purposes. No information relating to such reports shall be released to non-district personnel except to child protective and law enforcement agency personnel as needed in connection with investigative or child protection functions, or as otherwise required by district administrative rule, policy, or law.

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