

**Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School**  
**Policy S5: Mandatory Reporting Of Child Abuse**  
**Adopted: September 17, 2020**  
**Amended: September 14, 2023**

The Governing Board of Southwest Georgia Stem Charter hereby adopts the following policy regarding reports of child abuse which shall be effective on the date the policy is adopted by the Board.

1. All employees of the Governing Board, including all teachers, administrators, school counselors, visiting teachers, as well as all school social workers, school psychologists, and all other personnel employed by the Board and volunteers, who have reason or cause to believe that a child is being or has been abused shall report that abuse to the school leader or designee immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused, in accordance with Georgia law and the protocol for handling child abuse cases in Randolph County.
2. All employees shall report all child abuse including verbal, psychological and emotional abuse, sexual abuse/exploitation, child neglect, youth on youth sexual act, or youth on youth abusive sexual contact involving any child under the age of 18.
3. The employee shall include all pertinent factual evidence, dates, names, incidents, witnesses, and other evidentiary information causing suspicion of abuse or neglect in the report. Such documentation shall be retained separately from a student's cumulative file.
4. All board members, employees and volunteers of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School are required to undergo training as to what constitutes child abuse and neglect, what the state statutes are, and how to properly report such cases.
5. Under no circumstances shall the principal or designee to whom a report of child abuse has been made exercise any control, restraint, modification or make other change to the information provided by a mandated reporter, although the reporter may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide any additional, relevant and necessary information when making the report.
6. The following definitions shall apply to this policy.
  - a. **Child:** Any individual who is under the age of 18 years, if alleged to be a deprived child, abused child, or unruly child.
  - b. **Child Abuse:**
    - i. Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other person responsible for the care of such child by other than accidental means; provided, however, that physical forms of discipline may be used as long as there is no physical injury to the child;
    - ii. Neglect of a child by a parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other person responsible for the care of such child;
    - iii. Emotional abuse of a child;
    - iv. Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child;
    - v. Prenatal abuse of a child by a parent;
    - vi. An act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm to the child's physical, mental, or emotional health;
    - vii. Trafficking a child for labor servitude.
  - c. **School Leader:** For the purposes of this policy, the staff member responsible for the overall operation of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School.
  - d. **Injury:** Bruises, cuts, or complaint of pain related to a physical altercation or direct contact with a child.

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- e. Neglect: Lack of supervision, abandonment, and/or disregard for the child's basic needs for food, shelter, medical care or education that places the child at substantial risk of harm.
- f. Sexual Abuse/Exploitation: Invasion of privacy, or staff voyeurism for sexual gratification including an adult employing, using, persuading, enticing or coercing a youth under the age of 18 to engage in any act which involves: sexual intercourse (genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal between

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persons of the same or opposite sex), bestiality, masturbation, lewd exhibition of the genitals or pubic area of any person, flagellation or torture by or upon a person who is nude, physical restraint of a person who is nude, physical contact in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification with any person's clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks or a female's clothed or unclothed breasts, defecation or urination for the purpose of sexual stimulation, penetration of the vagina or rectum by any object except when done as part of a recognized medical procedure conducted by a person who allows, permits, encourages or requires a youth to participate in prostitution or sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual or print medium.

- g. Youth on Youth Sexual Act: Contact between any youth (regardless of their ages) that involves:
  - i. Contact between the penis and vagina or the penis and anus, including penetration (however slight); or
  - ii. Contact between the mouth and the penis, vagina or anus; or
  - iii. Penetration of the anal or genital opening of another person by a hand, finger, or other object.
- h. Youth on Youth Abusive Sexual Contact: Contact between youth that involves intentional touching, either directly or indirectly, or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks when the intent is not to harm or debilitate.