

8462 - STUDENT ABUSE, ABANDONMENT, AND NEGLECT

The School Board is concerned with the physical and mental well-being of the students of this District and requires that school employees comply with the mandated identification and reporting of known or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect in accordance with law.

Reporting Known or Suspected Cases

- A. Any person, including teachers, administrators, support personnel, and other District and school personnel who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child or a student has been abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, adult, or other person responsible for the child's welfare or that a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Families in a manner prescribed by law.

Further any person, including teachers, administrators, support personnel, and other District and school personnel, who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child or a student is the victim of childhood sexual abuse or the victim of a known or suspected juvenile sexual offender, shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Families in a manner prescribed by law.

A person who is required to report known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so commits a felony of the third degree.

- B. The proper procedure for reporting known or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect is:
 1. Make a report immediately to the Department of Children and Families central abuse hotline, using the single Statewide toll-free telephone number: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873), or via fax, web-based chat, or web-based report. School employees reporting such cases are required to provide their names to the hotline staff. The names of reporters shall be entered into the record of the report, but shall be held confidential and exempt as provided by law.
 2. As soon as practicable after making the report, the school staff member shall inform the principal or supervisor of his/her knowledge or suspicions, and advise that individual that the report has been made.
- C. School employees are to be advised that reporting their knowledge or suspicions of suspected abuse to a principal, or supervisor, or other school or District personnel does not comply with the mandatory reporting requirements of the law. The principal, supervisor, and other school or District personnel who are informed of suspected abuse, abandonment, and neglect likewise have an obligation to report to the central abuse hotline as required by law.
- D. No employee of the District shall be subject to reprisal or discharge because of his/her actions in reporting abuse or neglect pursuant to the requirements of F.S. 39.203.
- E. No Board employee may agree, as a condition of receiving information about child abuse, neglect, or abandonment from a victim, a perpetrator, witness, or other person, that the Board employee will not report this information as required by law and this Board policy.

False Reports

A person who knowingly and willfully makes a false report of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect, or who advises another to make a false report, is guilty of a felony of the third degree and may be subject to other penalties in accordance with Florida law.

Posting of Notices

Each school in the District shall:

A. post in a prominent place in each school a notice that, pursuant to F.S. Chapter 39, all employees and agents of the Board have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect; have immunity from liability if they report such cases in good faith; and have a duty to comply with child protective investigations and all other provisions of law relating to child abuse, abandonment, and neglect;

The notice shall also include the Statewide toll-free telephone number of the central abuse hotline.

B. post in a prominent place at each school site and on each school's Internet website, if available, the policies and procedures for reporting alleged misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student; the contact person to whom the report is made; and the penalties imposed on instructional personnel or school administrators who fail to report suspected or actual child abuse or alleged misconduct by other instructional personnel or school administrators;

C. post in a prominent place, in a clearly visible location and public area of the school, readily accessible to and widely used by students, a sign in English and Spanish that contains:

1. the Statewide toll-free telephone number of the central abuse hotline as provided in F.S. Chapter 39;
2. instructions to call 911 for emergencies; and
3. directions for accessing the Department of Children and Families Internet website for more information on reporting abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The notice must be on at least one (1) posted in each school, on a sheet that measures at least 11 inches by 17 inches, produced in large print, and placed at student eye level for each viewing.

Training

All [X] teachers [X] instructional staff members in grades K-12 (X) and all school administrators, psychologists, nurses, and social workers are required to participate in the continuing education training provided by the Department of Children and Family **Services** on identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

All instructional personnel, school administrators, and educational support employees who have contact with students must receive State-developed training on human trafficking awareness. Employees must provide a written acknowledgment to the school after receiving the training, and the school must retain that acknowledgment. Individuals who are required to receive training on human trafficking awareness must report any suspicion of human trafficking of a child to the Department of Children and Families or the Florida Human Trafficking Hotline at either entity's designated telephone number.

Liaison

The Superintendent will act as a liaison to the Department of Children and Families and the child protection team when a case of suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect or an unlawful sexual offense involving a child is referred to such a team.

The Superintendent shall also serve, or nominate a designee to represent the District, on the Local Child Abuse Death Review Committee as required by State law. The Superintendent shall also require District staff, who, in a professional capacity, dealt with a child whose death is verified as caused by abuse or neglect, or with the family of the child, to attend any meetings of the local committee at which the child's case is reviewed.

Liability

Employees who report abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect of a student may be entitled to certain statutory liability protections as set forth in F.S. 39.203.

F.S. 39.01(47)

F.S. 39.201
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F.S. 39.206
F.S. 39.303
F.S. 383.402
F.S. 1001.41
F.S. 1001.42
F.S. 1006.061
F.S. 1006.481
F.S. 1012.98