

## CHAPTER 2.00 - SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION

### REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

2.80\*+

#### I. Definitions of Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect

- A. *Abuse* means any willful or threatened act that results in any physical, mental or sexual injury or harm that causes, or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired. Abuse of a child includes acts or omissions. Corporal discipline of a child by a parent or legal custodian for disciplinary purposes does not in itself constitute abuse when it does not result in harm to the child.
- B. *Abandonment* means a situation in which the parent or legal custodian of a child, or in absence of the parent or legal custodian, the caregiver responsible for the child's welfare, while being able, makes no provision for the child's support and makes no effort to communicate with the child, which situation is sufficient to evince a willful rejection of parental obligations.
- C. *Neglect* occurs when a child is deprived of or is allowed to be deprived of, necessary food, clothing, shelter or medical treatment or a child is permitted to live in an environment when such deprivation or environment causes the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired. The foregoing circumstances shall not be considered neglect if caused primarily by financial inability, unless actual services for relief have been offered and rejected. A parent or legal custodian legitimately practicing religious beliefs in accordance with a recognized church or religious organization who thereby does not provide specific medical treatment for a child shall not, for that reason alone, be considered a negligent parent or legal custodian.

#### II. Notification of Responsibility

A notice providing the following information shall be posted in a prominent place in each school:

- A. All employees of the District have the responsibility to report all actual and suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment or neglect; immunity from liability if they report such cases in good faith; and the responsibility to comply with child protective investigations and all other provisions of law related to child abuse, abandonment or neglect.

B. Statewide toll-free telephone number for the central abuse hotline.

III. Prohibition Against Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect

The School Board strongly prohibits any action or omission constituting child abuse, neglect, or abandonment by any of its employees, agents, volunteers, or by other persons affiliated in any way with the School District. Further, all employees, agents, and volunteers of the School District must comply with Florida law requiring reporting of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

IV. Requirements for Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect

A. Florida Statute requires that any person-including but not limited to:

1. Physician, osteopathic physician, medical examiner, chiropractic physician, nurse, or hospital personnel engaged in the admission, examination, care or treatment of persons;
2. Health or mental health professional other than one listed in A1 above;
3. Practitioner who relies solely on spiritual means for healing;
4. School teacher or other school official or personnel;
5. Social worker, day care center worker, or other professional child care, foster care, residential, or institutional worker; or
6. Law enforcement officer or judge

who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Family Services.

B. Each report of known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect shall be made immediately to the Department of Children and Family Service's abuse hotline, on the single statewide toll-free telephone number. The teacher or staff member may also contact the principal, a school designee, district office or support person to let them know the case has been reported, and for their own documentation and protection file a Child Abuse Incident Referral Report.

C. Reporters in the categories specified in A. above, will be required to provide their names to hotline staff. The extent of confidentiality of the reporter's name, with respect to the Department's records, is governed by Florida Statute.