

TRI-TOWNSHIP CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL CORPORATION

POLICY

REGARDING

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

Indiana law (IC 31-33-56) requires any staff member who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect to report this matter to the building principal immediately. The law (I.C. 31-33-5-3) further states that nothing relieves an individual from his/her own responsibility to report, unless a report has already been made to the best of the individual's belief.

Please follow the procedures outlined below if you have reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect:

1. Any staff member who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall immediately report that matter to the building principal. If the building principal is not available the staff member shall immediately contact the superintendent (219-754-2709).
 - a. "Reason to believe" does not mean that you have to provide proof of what happened or that you are required to investigate what may or may not have occurred. In fact if you ask the student questions, it may actually interfere with the investigation by Child Protection Services. If you have reasonable suspicions, report the information immediately to the building principal. Do not wait for proof! Do not conduct your own investigation.
 - b. When in doubt as to whether you have "reason to believe," make a report.
2. The building principal may consult with other staff members including the counselor, social worker or crisis team, or superintendent to determine if the situation is reportable under Indiana law.
 - a. If the situation is reportable then the building principal will then immediately make a report or direct the staff member to make a report to child protection services at (219) 878-6370 or 1-800-800-5556. If there is no response at the CPS Hotline, and the school is afraid to send the child home, call the LaPorte County Police Department at 326-7700. If you cannot reach Child Protection Services or the police department, call 911.
 - b. If the principal determines the situation does not need to be reported, then the principal will notify the staff member who made the report to the principal of the decision not to report the matter and the reason it was decided not to report. The staff member shall be informed that if they depend on the principal to make the report and that report is not made, then that staff member could personally be held criminally liable under Indiana law for failure to report.
3. The building principal shall notify the superintendent immediately when a report has been made to child protection services or law enforcement regarding suspected child abuse or neglect.

Who Shall Report

The statute outlining the reporting procedures requires that anyone having reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect must make a report to the Child Protection Service and/or the appropriate law enforcement agency. (I.C. 31-33-5-1) By law, that individual (including any staff member of a public or private school) is required to make a report to Child Protection Service and to his/her principal or school district designee. Both parties are responsible for seeing that a report is made. The law specifically states that notification of the principal or school district designee does not relieve the first individual of the responsibility of seeing that the matter is reported.

Reason to Believe

"Reason to Believe" has been defined by statute as "evidence that, if presented to individuals of similar background and training, would cause those individuals to believe that a child was abused or neglected." Do not wait for proof! Do not conduct your own investigation. (I.C. 31-9-2-101). When in doubt as to whether you have "reason to believe," make a report.

Reporting

The number for Child Protection Services in LaPorte County is (219) 878-6370 and statewide is: 1-800-800-5556. If you call the 800 number, they will connect you with the proper county CPS for reporting your specific case. If there is no response at the CPS Hotline, and the school is afraid to send the child home, call the LaPorte County Police Department at 326-7400. If you cannot reach Child Protection Services or law enforcement, call 911.

Failure to Report

Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a Class B misdemeanor punishable by up to 6 months imprisonment and a \$1,000 fine. (I.C. 31-33-22-1; I.C. 35-50-3-3) Indiana law (I.C. 31-33-5-3). School districts and their employees individually also risk a civil action for damages by the victim of abuse or neglect if they fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The law states that nothing relieves an individual from his/her own responsibility to report, unless a report has already been made to the best of the individual's belief.

Immunity from civil or criminal liability

It is important for you to know that a person, who, in good faith, makes a report of suspected abuse and neglect, is immune from any civil or criminal liability. Furthermore, the law presumes that the person who makes the report is acting in good faith. Immunity does not extend to anyone who has acted maliciously or in bad faith. (I.C.31-33-6-2)

Identity of report is confidential by law

The identity of the person making the report (in good faith) is confidential by statute.

Neglect (non-inclusive definition)

Neglect is the inability, refusal or neglect of a parent/guardian to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or supervision.

Abuse (non-inclusive definition)

Abuse is an act or omission of a parent/guardian that seriously endangers the child's physical or mental health. Abuse also includes a child who endangers himself or others, children born with fetal alcohol syndrome or drugs in their body, and sexual abuse.

Adopted by the Tri-Township Consolidated School Corporation School Board this 11h day of
Febraury, 2013

Reviewed and approved on April 21, 2016