

As a social resource, the school is second only to the family unit in its potential for sustained, thorough involvement in a child's life. Because of this sustained contact, school personnel are in an excellent position to identify abused or neglected children and to refer them for treatment and protection.

To combat the child abuse and neglect problem and in compliance with state law, any district employee having reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen in the course of professional duties has been physically, mentally or sexually abused, or neglected or that threatened future abuse or neglect will occur shall immediately contact the county human services department, the county sheriff or the city police and inform the agency contacted of the facts and circumstances which lead to the filing of the report.

All employees shall receive training, approved by the Department of Public Instruction, in identifying children who have been abused and neglected, and in the laws and procedures under s.48.981 governing the reporting of suspected or threatened child abuse and neglect. A school district employee shall receive this training within the first six months of employment and at least once every five years after the initial training.

It is not the responsibility of school personnel to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, nor to determine whether the child needs protection. School personnel shall not contact the child's family or any other person to determine the cause of any suspected abuse or neglect.

School personnel filing reports in good faith are immune from liability and may not be discharged from employment, disciplined, or otherwise discriminated against regarding employment, or threatened with such treatment for doing so. Failure to report may be punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000.00 or six months in jail or both. All reports and records shall be confidential.

The District Administrator shall establish any necessary procedures to implement this policy and to comply with state law.

A representative of a county agency investigating suspected child abuse or neglect may contact, observe or interview a child at school without permission from the child's parent or guardian if necessary to determine if the child needs protection or services.

Because the failure of legally mandated reporters to report is punishable by a fine and/or jail sentence, this policy shall annually be distributed as widely as possible by means such as posting or publishing and shall be included in the Employee Handbook.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Wisconsin Statutes, Section 48.981 (Abused or Neglected Children)

APPROVED: February 10, 2003

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