

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

The Board of Education requires its staff members to comply with the state child abuse and neglect laws and the mandatory reporting of suspected neglect and/or abuse. Any school official or employee who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or who observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, will immediately report or cause a report to be made to the building principal, or his or her designee, who will then become responsible for making a report via the Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-392-3738) to the Missouri Division of Family Services (DFS), as required by law. The building principal will make the superintendent aware that a report has been made, and will keep him or her aware of the status of the case.

The school, as a mandated reporter, will be entitled upon request to the local DFS office or to the social worker completing the investigation to information on the general disposition of the report. The information should be shared with the staff member who originated the report, but should not be released to anyone else without written authorization from DFS. Parents/Guardians should be referred to DFS for information regarding the investigation. Parents or legal guardians have access to the DFS records after the investigation is completed, except that the identity of the reporter is not released.

When DFS receives a child abuse report which alleges that an employee of a school district has abused a student, the report is immediately referred to the school superintendent (or the president of the school board in situations concerning the superintendent) who will conduct an initial investigation. If it is determined that the sole purpose of the report is to harass a school employee, the superintendent or board president will jointly investigate the matter with the juvenile officer or a law enforcement officer designated by the juvenile officer. Findings and conclusions will be issued as required by section 160.261, RSMo.

All other reports of any nature will be immediately returned to DFS for investigation, and the superintendent will take no further action. The superintendent/school board president will be considered a member of the multidisciplinary team, and as such will be involved in the investigation and have access to appropriate information including the outcome of the investigation.

Any person who in good faith participates in the making of such reports, or in any judicial proceeding resulting therefrom, will be immune from civil or criminal liability. It shall not be the responsibility of the school official or employee who initiated the report to prove that the child has been neglected or abused.

The superintendent will prepare and implement procedures as are necessary to accomplish the intent of this policy and of the law.

Adopted: October 22, 1996

Legal Refs: §§160.216, 210.110-.165, RSMo

