

CHILD ABUSE - REPORTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Policy Code: 4240/7312

The board of education supports all employees who make a report of child abuse, neglect, dependency or death as a result of maltreatment in good faith.

Any school employee who knows or has cause to suspect child abuse, neglect, dependency or death as a result of maltreatment is legally required to report the case of the child to the director of social services. The employee also shall report the case immediately to the principal.

Any doubt about reporting a suspected situation shall be resolved in favor of reporting and the report shall be made immediately. A school employee is immune by statute from any civil and/or criminal liability when reporting in good faith suspected child abuse, neglect, dependency or death as a result of maltreatment. Failure on the part of any school employee to report may result in disciplinary action being brought against the employee by the school district or civil action under the law.

The principal may establish a contact person in the school to act as a liaison with social services. All employees shall cooperate fully with the department of social services in its investigation of suspected child abuse, neglect, dependency or death as a result of maltreatment. Employees shall permit the child to be interviewed by social services on school campuses during school hours and shall provide social services with confidential information, so long as the disclosure does not violate state or federal law. Any confidential information disclosed by the department of social services to employees shall remain confidential and shall only be redisclosed for purposes directly connected with carrying out the responsibilities of the school system or the employee.

Upon request and to the extent permitted by law, the school district shall share with other agencies designated in G.S. 7B-3100(a), information that is relevant (1) to any assessment of a report of child abuse, neglect, dependency or death as a result of maltreatment by the department of social services; (2) to the provision or arrangement of protective services in a child abuse, neglect, or dependency case by the department of social services; or (3) to any case in which a petition is filed alleging that a juvenile is abused, neglected, dependent, undisciplined or delinquent. School system officials and the designated agencies must continue to share such information until the protective services case is closed by the department of social services or, if a petition is filed, until the juvenile is no longer subject to the jurisdiction of juvenile court.

The superintendent shall develop any necessary procedures for reporting suspected child abuse, neglect, dependency or death as a result of maltreatment, for sharing information with designated agencies, and for cooperating with investigations by the department of social services. The board encourages school officials to provide staff development opportunities related to identifying and reporting child abuse, neglect, dependency or death as a result of maltreatment.

Legal References: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; G.S. 7B-101, -301, -302 -309, -3100; 8-53.4; 14-318.2; 115C-400, -402

Cross References: Student Records (policy 4700), Professional and Staff Development (policy 1610/7800)

Adopted: April 9, 1998 to become effective July 1, 1998

Administrative Procedure: None

Revised: November 14, 2002, December 11, 2008, November 9, 2017