

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW LONDON

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE 454 - CHILD NEGLECT AND/OR ABUSE

- A. Any school employee as defined in by state laws and administrative regulations, having reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen in the course of their professional duties has been abused or neglected or having reason to believe that a child has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect will occur, shall report that suspicion or belief to the appropriate authorities. At all times it shall be the aim of the school employee to make the report to county child protective services or law enforcement personnel as quickly as possible. Any delay would not be in the best interests of the child and is not the policy of the District.
- B. A school employee making a child abuse or neglect report shall inform the building principal or his/her designee of the report so they are aware of the situation. School employees may also consult with student services staff (e.g., the school guidance counselor) on the reporting process and any necessary follow-up activities. No building principal or other District employee may attempt to delay, modify, or prevent any reports of suspected or threatened child abuse or neglect. It is not the responsibility of school personnel to investigate child abuse or neglect reports or to prove that abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur. Investigation of child abuse and neglect reports is the legal responsibility of trained county child protective services and/or law enforcement personnel.
- C. All information pertaining to a child abuse or neglect report shall be kept confidential, including the identity of the reporter, and shall only be shared with those individuals specifically authorized by law to have access to that information.
- D. The District shall not take any disciplinary action against a school employee, discriminate against an employee in regard to employment, or threaten an employee with any such treatment for making a child abuse or neglect report in good faith under this policy. School employees may be subject to school disciplinary action, as well as penalties under state law, for failure to report suspected or threatened child abuse or neglect which they have knowledge of or for divulging confidential child abuse and neglect report information to an unauthorized person.
- E. If a school employee or student is suspected of misconduct under this policy, the District shall conduct its own internal investigation to determine appropriate school disciplinary and other actions.
- F. The District Administrator or his or designee shall establish any necessary procedures to implement this policy and to comply with state law

requirements. To maintain awareness on the part of school employees of their child abuse and neglect reporting responsibilities under this policy and state law, each school employee shall participate in required training in identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. In addition, school employees shall be informed of this policy and its implementing procedures annually through the Staff Handbook and through other means deemed appropriate by the District Administrator or his or her designee.

G. Child abuse or neglect reporting process for district employees

1. Reports of suspected or threatened child abuse or neglect shall be made immediately by phone or personally to the following applicable and appropriate agency:
 - a. Outagamie County Health and Human Services Department (920) 832-5161
 - b. Waupaca County Human Services Department Child and Family Services (715) 258-6300
 - c. Winnebago County Human Services Department (920) 727-2882

If a report to the appropriate department is not possible, or if the person making the report suspects that the health or safety of a child is in immediate danger and wishes to request an immediate investigation, the school employee should make the child abuse or neglect report to New London Police Department (920) 982-8505, the Outagamie/Waupaca/Winnebago County Sheriff's Department.

School employees may consult with student services staff prior to making a report but may not delay the report beyond the time the student leaves the supervision of school staff on the day that the suspicion of abuse or neglect or threatened abuse or neglect arises. It is not the responsibility of school personnel to obtain definitive proof that abuse or neglect has occurred, and school personnel shall not further investigate a child abuse or neglect situation following the making of a report, except in cases where an administrator has a responsibility to conduct an independent internal investigation into alleged misconduct by a student, school employee, agent of the District, etc. For example, school personnel shall not contact for investigative purposes a caregiver, or other person in the community, who is suspected of or who potentially may be responsible for the suspected abuse or neglect.

2. When making a child abuse or neglect report, the reporter should be prepared to provide as much of the following information as possible:

- a. The employee's name, phone number, relationship to the child, and school phone number.
- b. The name, home address, and age of the child suspected of or threatened with being abused or neglected.
- c. The name, home address(es) and work place(s) of the child's parent(s) or guardian.
- d. The names and ages of the child's siblings, if relevant to the report.
- e. A description of why he/she believes the child has been abused or neglected or has been threatened with abuse or neglect, statements allegedly made by the child to others, and any relevant circumstances or conditions in the home or elsewhere of which the reporter is aware.

H. Child abuse and neglect investigations

1. In all cases, the building principal or his/her designee shall be informed that a child abuse or neglect report has been or will be filed. The building principal or designee shall support the employee in their action(s) and shall not attempt to delay, modify, or prevent any report of suspected child abuse or neglect. Informing the principal or designee of any suspected or threatened abuse or neglect does not eliminate a school employee's independent responsibility to make a report to county child protective services or the appropriate law enforcement agency.
2. The county agency charged with responsibility for investigating child abuse or neglect reports may generally contact, observe or interview a child at any location, including school, to determine if the child is in need of protection or services. School personnel may not require parent notification before allowing such interviews to take place at school when the department or agency is exercising its investigative authority under state law. County child protective services or law enforcement personnel may request the cooperation of a school teacher, counselor or other person whose presence would aid in the interview process. They may also, in the exercise of professional judgment and in accordance with department standards, exclude school personnel from the interview.

I. Confidentiality of student record and child abuse and neglect reporting information

1. School personnel shall keep in mind state and federal laws and school district procedures regarding the confidentiality of student records

when disclosing information from a student's school records to child protective services or law enforcement personnel. Student records may be disclosed under state and federal laws to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of a student or other individuals. School personnel should take into consideration the totality of the circumstances pertaining to the threat to health or safety.

2. When student record information is disclosed in this situation, school personnel shall record: (a) the threat to the health or safety of the student or other individuals that formed the basis for the decision; and (b) the parties to whom the student record information was disclosed.
3. To provide for compliance with state law requirements, school personnel should keep child abuse and neglect reports and any information obtained from child protective services or law enforcement personnel regarding a child abuse or neglect report in a confidential file that is separate from the student's regular school records file(s). Such information can only be disclosed to the persons and for the purposes specified by law.

ADOPTION DATE: May 10, 1999

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CROSS-REFERENCE: Policy 454 Child Neglect and/or Abuse
Staff Handbook
Parent/Student Handbook

LEGAL REFERENCE: Section 48.02 Wisconsin Statutes