

PORT EDWARDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**Board of Education Policy**

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The Port Edwards Board of Education recognizes the serious problems associated with child abuse and neglect. The Board of Education also recognizes the legal responsibility for reporting suspected cases of abuse and neglect.

School employees have a sense of responsibility for children, and therefore, are committed to upholding the health, safety, and welfare of each individual child. This sense of personal responsibility, in addition to the legal mandate, dictates the involvement of the school in problems associated with child abuse and neglect. Based on these legal and moral responsibilities, a policy and guidelines are developed for the Port Edwards School District.

All school personnel are required to report cases of suspected child abuse and neglect. Any other person having reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected may make a report.

Reportable conditions are facts and circumstances contributing to a suspicion of child abuse or neglect or to a belief that a child has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect of the child will occur. If there is doubt or question of whether to report such cases, the matter will be resolved in favor of the child.

Persons required to report incidents, or who may report, shall immediately contact duly constituted authorities. The reporter will relay information requested by the authorities, to whom the incident is reported. Whoever fails to report an incident as required by law may be penalized. For the purpose of any proceedings, civil or criminal, any person making a report under this policy will be immune from liability. The identity of persons making a report shall remain confidential in accordance with state law.

All reports and records made under this policy shall be maintained according to state statutes and school board policy.

A reporting procedure will be followed in reporting suspected cases of abuse and neglect.

CROSS REFERENCES: 454 – Rule, Procedures for Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting
454 – Exhibit (1), Personal Notes of Reported Suspected Abuse or Neglect
454 – Exhibit (2), Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect
Professional Staff Handbook
Support Staff Handbook

LEGAL REFERENCES: Wisconsin State Statutes – Sections 48.02

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PROCEDURES FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

I. REPORTERS

- It is not the staff member's responsibility to determine what constitutes a legitimate case of child abuse or neglect. Any staff member who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen by the person in the course of professional duties has been abused or neglected, or who believes that a child has been threatened with abuse or neglect, is required to report the incident.
- Any other person, including an attorney, may make such a report.

II. REPORTABLE CONDITIONS AS DEFINED BY LAW

- Physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means, including, but not limited to lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising or great bodily harm.
- Sexual intercourse or sexual contact as prohibited by law.
- Emotional damage for which the child's parent, guardian or legal custodian has neglected, refused or been unable to obtain the necessary treatment or take steps to improve the symptoms.
- Harm to a child's psychological or intellectual functioning evidenced by one or more of the following characteristics exhibited to a severe degree: anxiety; depression; withdrawal; outward aggressive behavior; or a substantial and observable change in behavior, emotional response or cognition that is not within the normal range for the child's age and stage of development.
- Failure, refusal or inability on the part of a parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person exercising temporary or permanent control over a child, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.

III. METHOD AND TIME BY WHICH REPORT IS TO BE MADE

- Any person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected, or at risk of being abused or neglected, shall immediately contact the building principal.
- Upon receipt of the report, the building principal will contact the school psychologist, counselor, and school nurse.
- If the building principal is not available, the person making the report shall contact the school psychologist, counselor or school nurse.
- If none of the above are available, the reporter shall contact Social Services or the Sheriff's Department.
- Persons mandated to report by law, including the school nurse, counselor and school psychologist shall immediately contact, by telephone or personally, the county agency, sheriff or local police department to file the report of suspected abuse or neglect and in the case of American Indian children, the tribal government.

VIII. REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- A. All school employees are cautioned against doing any investigatory work, as it may interfere with the mandated investigation done by the Department of Social Services and/or the police department. School personnel are responsible only for reporting and need only to suspect to report the incident. It is the responsibility of Social Services and/or police personnel to investigate possible child abuse or neglect. Therefore, school personnel should not pressure the child to gain privileged information regarding any injury or other information surrounding the suspected abuse and/or neglect. School personnel shall not contact the child's family or any other person to determine the cause of any suspected abuse or neglect.
- B. Persons making the report should identify themselves so that any further needed information may be obtained at a later date. The identify of reports shall remain confidential in accordance with state law.
- C. The referral person and the school's registered nurse, or designee, shall request an "immediate" investigation if he/she has reason to believe that the child's health or safety is in immediate danger.

- D. The referral person and the school's registered nurse, or other designated personnel, shall make a personal record of the report. This shall be considered "personal notes" and not a student record. If at a future date the Department of Social Services requests a report form for their agency, the referral person and the school's registered nurse, or designee, will submit this report.
- E. Social Services or police personnel are permitted to interview the identified child on school property to determine if a child is in need of protection or services. Representatives from these agencies will be expected to follow school protocol and report to the building office prior to interviewing the child. School personnel shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible with the agency conducting the investigation as required by law.
- F. The Department of Social Services is required within 24 hours of receipt of an initial report to commence an investigation of the incident.
- G. The Department of Social Services is required to inform the mandated reporter of the status of the case within 60 days after the receipt of the initial report.
- H. Confidentiality shall be maintained in all abuse and neglect cases, to the extent required by law.

IV. INFORMATION REQUIRED OF THE REPORTER

The reporter shall provide information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect in as detailed a manner as possible, including but not limited to, when and where the incident took place, who was involved, and whether or not the abuse or neglect happened before.

If possible, the reporter shall have the following information available when making the report:

1. name of student, with correct spelling
2. address of student
3. home phone number of student, if any
4. parent/guardian name
5. siblings' names and approximate ages
6. birth date of student
7. grade in school
8. county of residence

V. IMMUNITY

In accordance with law, any person participating in good faith in the making of a child abuse or neglect report shall have immunity from liability, civil, or criminal, that results by reason of this action. For the purpose of any proceedings, civil or criminal, the good faith of any person reporting shall be presumed.

VI. PENALTY FOR NON-REPORTING

- Any mandated reporter who fails to file a report as required by law, shall be subject to penalty as outlined in state statute.
- Any staff member found to be in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

VII. CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

All records and reports made and maintained shall be confidential, in accordance with state statute and school board policy. Reports and records may be disclosed only under certain circumstances and to certain persons outlined in state law.

PERSONAL NOTES OF REPORTED SUSPECTED ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

This report is a confidential personal notation and is not to be included in the academic or behavioral files.

Child's Name _____ Child's Date of Birth _____

Child's Address _____ Child's Sex _____

Parent/Guardian or Responsible Party of Child _____

Address of Parent/Guardian or Responsible Party of Child _____

Date of Referral _____ Time of Referral _____

Method of Referral _____ Agency Notified _____

Reason(s)/Circumstances Leading to Referral _____

Action Taken _____

Follow-up of Agency to Which Referral was Made _____

RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Each form of child abuse and neglect (physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and emotional maltreatment) can be found among school-age children. Sensitive educators can often identify a particular type of maltreatment through the child's appearance or behavior at school or during routine interviews with parent or child by recognizing physical and behavioral indicators. Academic and psychological clues can also provide some evidence of possible maltreatment.

Physical indicators of child abuse and neglect are indicators which usually are readily observable. They may be mild or severe, but they involve the child's physical appearance. Frequently, physical indicators are skin or bone injuries or evidence of lack of care and attention manifested in conditions such as malnutrition.

Educators are trained observers of children's behavior. They are sensitive to the range of behavior expected of children of a given group, and they are quick to notice behaviors which fall outside this range. Particularly for the educator, behavior can often be a clue to the presence of child abuse and neglect. Behavioral indicators may exist alone or may accompany physical indicators. They range from subtle clues, a "sixth sense" that something is amiss, to graphic statements by children that they have been physically assaulted or sexually molested.

Physical and behavioral indicators are displayed in the chart following this page. The list is not exhaustive. Many more indicators exist than can be included. Neither does the presence of a single indicator prove that maltreatment exists. However, the repeated presence of an indicator, the presence of several indicators in combination, or the appearance of serious injury should alert the educator to the possibility that a case of child abuse and neglect is at hand.

PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

TYPE OF CA/N	PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS
<p>PHYSICAL ABUSE</p>	<p>Unexplained Bruises and Welts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on face, lips, mouth - on torso, back, buttocks, thighs - in various stages of healing - clustered, forming regular patterns - reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle) - on several different surface areas - regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation <p>Unexplained Burns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks - immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like, doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia) - patterned like electric burner, iron, etc. - rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso <p>Unexplained Fractures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to skull, nose, facial structure - in various stages of healing - multiple or spiral fractures <p>Unexplained Lacerations or Abrasions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to mouth, lips, gums, eyes - to external genitalia 	<p>Wary of Adult Contacts</p> <p>Apprehensive When Other Children Cry</p> <p>Behavioral Extremes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aggressiveness - withdrawal <p>Frightened of Parents</p> <p>Afraid to go Home</p> <p>Reports Injury by Parents</p>
<p>PHYSICAL NEGLECT</p>	<p>Consistent Hunger, Poor Hygiene, Inappropriate Dress</p> <p>Consistent Lack of Supervision, Especially in Dangerous Activities or Long Periods</p> <p>Unattended Physical Problems or Medical Needs</p> <p>Abandonment</p>	<p>Begging, Stealing Food</p> <p>Extended Stays at School (early arrival and later departure)</p> <p>Constant Fatigue, Listlessness or Falling Asleep in Class</p> <p>Alcohol or Drug Abuse</p> <p>Delinquency (e.g. thefts)</p> <p>States There is Not Caretaker</p>
<p>SEXUAL ABUSE</p>	<p>Difficulty In Walking or Sitting</p> <p>Torn, Stained or Bloody Underclothing</p> <p>Pain or Itching in Genital Area</p> <p>Bruises, or Bleeding in External Genitalia, Vaginal or Anal Areas</p> <p>Pregnancy</p>	<p>Unwilling to Change for Gym or Participate in Physical Education Classes</p> <p>Withdrawal, Fantasy or Infantile Behavior</p> <p>Bizarre, Sophisticated, or Unusual Sexual Behavior or Knowledge</p> <p>Poor Peer Relationships</p> <p>Delinquent or Runaway</p> <p>Reports Sexual Assault by Caretaker</p>
<p>EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT</p>	<p>Speech Disorders</p> <p>Lags in Physical Development</p> <p>Failure-to-Thrive</p>	<p>Habit Disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.)</p> <p>Conduct Disorders (antisocial, destructive, etc.)</p> <p>Neurotic Traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)</p> <p>Psychoneurotic Reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias, hypochondria)</p> <p>Behavior Extremes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compliant, passive - aggressive, demanding <p>Overly Adaptive Behavior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inappropriately adult - inappropriately infant <p>Development Lags (mental, emotional)</p> <p>Attempted Suicide</p>