

306 Suspected Child Abuse

Adopted: April 4, 2007

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Policy

Understanding child abuse and neglect and knowing how to take appropriate action are critical in protecting our students. Responding to child abuse and neglect is a societal responsibility. Board personnel share this responsibility with parents, child protection social workers, police, and every citizen. Board personnel can help by identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, cooperating with all investigations, and supporting our students, both emotionally and socially, in our classrooms and schools.

Child abuse and neglect means the physical or emotional injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of 19 by a person who is responsible for the child's care. Child abuse refers to the non-accidental situations in which a child suffers physical trauma, deprivation of basic physical and developmental needs, or emotional injury as a result of an act or omission by a parent, supervisor, or legal guardian.

There are three major categories of abuse:

1. Physical or sexual abuse (physical injuries, molestation, incest or sexual abuse)
2. Physical neglect (gross lack of supervision or abandonment, gross or repeated failure to meet the child's nutritional needs, failure to seek or comply with needed medical advice)
3. Emotional injury or neglect (failure to meet the emotional needs of the child for normal development, refusal to recognize and seek help for a child's emotional disturbance).

The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* imposes a duty on any person who has reason to believe that a child needs protection to promptly report the matter to the appropriate authorities, as defined in the School District's protocol document, *Responsibilities and Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect*.

"Reason to believe" means that, based on observation or information received, the person believes that a child has been or is likely to be at risk.

District Procedures

Procedures for dealing with suspected child abuse are outlined in the School District's child abuse protocol document, *Responsibilities and Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect*. All new employees receive training in the responsibilities and procedures for reporting suspected child abuse. District-wide training updates are provided for all School District employees.

The purpose of the protocol is to establish and clarify the practices of the agencies involved with School District #44 in responding to reports of child abuse and neglect, especially as they interact respecting:

- Reporting suspected child abuse and neglect
- Investigating suspected child abuse and neglect
- Sharing information about suspected child abuse and neglect.

The protocol is intended to:

- Facilitate collaboration between the Parties to ensure the safety, well-being and protection of children
- Support and be consistent with Board [Policy 301: Student Safety](#) and *Policy 306: Suspected Child Abuse*
- Be consistent with relevant legislation including the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, the *School Act*, and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Guidelines for Maintaining Confidentiality

A person must not disclose information obtained under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* except in accordance with the *CFCS Act* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* is the legislative authority regarding confidentiality and disclosure.

Resources

Responsibilities and Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

[Child, Family and Community Service Act](#)

[Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

[School Act](#)

[Responding to Child Welfare Concerns: Your Role in Knowing When and What to Report](#)

[The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect: For Service Providers](#)

[Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Service Agencies Status](#)