

**REPORTING CHILD ABUSE****DEFINITIONS:**

The term "abuse" means "inflicting or causing physical or mental injury, harm or imminent danger to the physical or mental health or welfare of a child other than by accidental means, including abandonment, unless the abandonment is a relinquishment substantially in accordance with W.S. 14-11-101 through 14-11-109, excessive or unreasonable corporal punishment, malnutrition or substantial risk thereof by reason of intentional or unintentional neglect, and the commission or allowing the commission of a sexual offense against a child as defined by law."

The term "neglect" means "a failure or refusal by those responsible for the child's welfare to provide adequate care, maintenance, supervision, education or medical, surgical or other care necessary for the child's well being. "Neglect for purposes of "education" as used in this policy includes willful absenteeism as defined in W.S. 21-4-101(a)(vii). Treatment given in good faith by spiritual means alone, through prayer, by a duly accredited practitioner in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination is not child neglect for that reason alone."

As required by law, any school employee who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected or who observes any child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, shall immediately report the situation to the school principal and/or school counselor who will immediately cause a report to be made to the child protective agency (Department of Family Services) or local law enforcement agency. Nothing stated herein is intended to relieve an employee of his/her obligation to report on his/her own behalf unless a report has been made or will be made.

Wyoming law provides that persons making a good faith report of suspected child abuse or neglect are immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise result by reason of the report.

A school principal, counselor, or other school district employee making or causing a report to be made as set forth herein shall also prepare a written report (JLF-E Report of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect Form) for the superintendent or his/her designee. The supervisor will confirm in writing within five working days

**REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

with the reporting employee when the report has been made as set forth herein. The report shall include the following:

- a. Name, age and address of the child.
- b. Name and address of the child's parents, guardians, and/or persons with whom he/she is living.
- c. The nature of the child's injury or condition; information on condition leading to abuse - all with dates as appropriate.
- d. Any other information that might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries or the conditions observed.

The written report shall not be made part of the child's educational records and no mention of the report shall be entered in the child's educational records.

After a report is made to the Department of Family Services or the local law enforcement agency, school district employees shall make themselves available for further communications concerning the matter. As the case is being investigated, the school may provide supportive aid and counseling services from school personnel for the child. An authorized District representative (i.e. guidance counselor, social worker, school nurse, principal or his/her designee) will be present at any meeting at school with the Department of Family Services personnel and the child.

Before a report is made school district employees shall not contact the child's family or any other persons to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect unless directed to do so by the superintendent or his/her designee.

Once a report of child abuse is given to the Department of Family Services or the local law enforcement agency, the responsibility for investigation and follow-up lies with that department. It is not the responsibility of the school staff to investigate the case. Therefore, school district employees shall not:

- a. Make home visits for investigative purposes.
- b. Take the child for medical treatment (this does not preclude taking action in an emergency situation).
- c. Convey messages between the agency and the parents or guardian.
- d. Take any other investigative action.

**REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

The School District shall adhere to the guidelines set forth in board policy with respect to disclosing records concerning the child.

No student may be removed from a school by an investigating agency except upon a valid court order or when there is reasonable cause to believe there exists imminent harm to the child's health or safety if the child is not taken into protective custody.

W.S. 14-3-201 et seq.

See also:

JLF-E - Report of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect Form

First Reading: 10-2-23  
Second Reading: 11-6-23