

CHILD PROTECTION

Background

The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* requires that anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected, and that the parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child, must report the suspect abuse or neglect to a child welfare worker at the Ministry for Children and Family Development or the Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agency.

The District recognizes the need to provide a safe learning environment for children, one in which the children and the adults who work with them, must operate in a climate of trust, mutual respect and understanding.

The District will provide appropriate procedures related to child abuse and neglect. It will cooperate with other agencies involved in these areas.

Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to support a comprehensive, coordinated and collaborative approach for responding to child abuse and neglect by:

- 1.1. Providing child abuse prevention programs to students;
- 1.2. Providing school officials, employees and other persons working in schools with training in recognizing signs of child abuse and neglect;
- 1.3. Providing school officials, employees and other persons working in schools with direction and training on their legal obligation to report child abuse and neglect to a Child Welfare Worker under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, to the police where the child is in immediate danger, and to school officials;
- 1.4. Requiring school officials to investigate and/or report to the police allegations of child abuse involving current and former District employees, volunteers or contract service providers;
- 1.5. Establishing a child abuse/neglect reporting and investigation protocol with other responsible agencies, to identify the roles and responsibilities of school officials and personnel from other agencies, in responding to allegations of child abuse or neglect;
- 1.6. Providing assistance to victims of child abuse and neglect by counselling and referrals to other agencies, as appropriate.

2. Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse can take physical, sexual, or emotional forms, or may take the form of parental neglect. The descriptions of physical abuse, emotional abuse, emotional harm, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and neglect contained in the BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers (2007) (pages 23-26) (or later editions) is to be applied for purposes of this Administrative Procedure.

3. Reporting and Investigation

- 3.1. Responses to reports of child abuse and neglect may involve District personnel, child welfare and law enforcement agencies.
- 3.2. The District supports a coordinated and collaborative response to reports of child abuse and neglect between the District, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agencies. The District supports the development of an interagency child abuse/neglect protocol agreement that sets out roles and responsibilities for reporting and investigating child abuse/neglect issues and is consistent with the District Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.
- 3.3. All school officials and employees must understand and respect their legal obligation to report child abuse and neglect to a child welfare worker where they have reason to believe that a child is in need of protection within the meaning of the Child, Family and Community Service Act. They also need to comply with their reporting obligations as identified in the District Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.
- 3.4. School officials must also understand their role in coordinating with responsible agencies and in investigating allegations of child abuse against school employees, in accordance with the District's Child Protection Reporting and Investigation Procedures and the interagency child abuse/neglect protocol agreement.

4. Respecting the Rights of Accused Individuals

- 4.1. The District acknowledges that individuals under investigation regarding allegations of child abuse or neglect may have contractual or other legal rights during the investigative process. District investigations will be conducted in a manner that is respectful of these rights.

5. Training and Educational Programs

- 5.1. The District requires that school officials, employees, volunteers and contract service providers receive training on how to recognize signs of child abuse or neglect, how to respond to reports of child abuse or neglect, and standards of conduct for employees, volunteers and service providers governing their interactions with students.
- 5.2. The Superintendent will ensure that appropriate opportunities to receive and/or review training are made available, on an annual basis, to school officials, employees, volunteers and contract service providers.
- 5.3. The Superintendent will ensure that child abuse prevention programs are provided to students.

Reference: Sections 7, 9, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 65, 79, 85, 177 School Act
Section 13, 14 Child, Family and Community Services Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Section 32.2 Health Profession Act
Section 27.1 Teacher Profession Act
Criminal Code of Canada
B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect –For Service Providers, 2007
Responding to Child Welfare Concerns, 2007
Responding to Child Welfare Concerns – Your Role in Knowing When and What to Report
Interagency Protocol for Reporting and Investigation of Child Abuse and Neglect
Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agency Protocol
Criminal Code of Canada
BCTF Code of Ethics

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