

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE/CHILD PROTECTION

FILE: JLF

TITLE: Reporting of Child Abuse and Child Neglect

POLICY:

All school personnel shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 230 of the Florida Statutes in the reporting and investigation of child abuse and/or neglect. All employees of the School Board of Orange County, Florida ("Board") shall report all suspected child abuse and/or neglect in the prescribed manner.

- (1) When the alleged abuser is the child's caretaker, school personnel shall call the twenty-four (24) hour, toll-free Department of Children and Families ("DCF") Abuse Registry at 1-800-96-ABUSE.
- (2) When the alleged abuser is not a caretaker, school personnel shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.
- (3) Conclusive proof of child abuse and/or neglect shall not be required in making a report.
- (4) The person suspecting the abuse and/or neglect shall make the report. Following the telephoned report, the principal must be informed and a report must be made to Employee Relations.
- (5) A report to the Abuse Registry may be made anonymously and may be followed up in writing within forty-eight (48) hours to the local DCF office. School employees are immune from liability resulting from reporting activity.
- (6) School personnel may be asked to assist with an investigation during school hours by providing access to the child or by being present during the interview. In the relevant Florida Statute, it provides that a school instructional staff member (including principals, but excluding secretarial support staff) who is known by the child may be present during the initial interview of a child protective or criminal investigation when the interview is conducted at school under the following conditions:
 - (a) DCF or the law enforcement agency believes the presence of the staff member could enhance the success of the interview;
 - (b) The child requests or consents to that staff member's presence at the interview; and/or
 - (c) The only exception is if a protective order of the court has been issued and made available to the principal or designee. Such a protective order shall clearly state that school personnel do not have the right to be present during the interview.
- (7) A law enforcement officer or an authorized agent of DCF may take the child into protective custody without consent or knowledge of the parents as

provided by the relevant Florida Statute. The principal or designee shall notify the parent that the child has been taken into custody by DCF and out of the custody of school officials except when the officer or DCF agent requests that the parent not be notified. The principal or designee shall require the officer or DCF agent to provide written statement to that effect for school files. The agent or officer taking a child into protective custody has the responsibility for notifying the parents, legal guardians or legal custodians that the child has been taken into protective custody.

- (8) All information generated pursuant to reports alleging child abuse or neglect by school personnel is confidential and shall not be disclosed to anyone, except as provided by the relevant Florida Statutes and this policy. Neither the school administration nor school instructional staff shall maintain a record of the alleged abuse or neglect or the investigation of the alleged abuse or neglect.

SPECIFIC AUTHORITY: Sections 39.201; 39.203; 39.303; 1006.061; 1006.07, Florida Statutes

TITLE: Institutional Abuse

POLICY:

Suspected abuse or neglect of students by school personnel other than the principal shall be reported to the principal of that school. The principal, upon receiving a report of a school employee's suspected abuse of a child, shall contact the Superintendent or designee who shall conduct the necessary investigation with the principal or designee. Any suspected abuse by the principal shall be reported to the Superintendent or designee, who shall conduct an investigation.

SPECIFIC AUTHORITY: Sections 39.201; 1001.54; 1012.22; 1012.27; 1012.28, Florida Statutes

ADOPTED: 11/17/08

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