

**Student Welfare**

**Reporting Student Abuse**

The Board of Education believes that school staff members, school volunteers and school contractors, are in unique positions to assist children, families, and the community in dealing with the issue of child abuse and neglect. Child abuse is defined as any physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted on a child other than by accidental means. Neglect is defined as the failure to provide the proper or necessary support, education, nutrition or medical, surgical or other care necessary for the child's well-being. The status as an unaccompanied youth is not, in and of itself, a sufficient basis for reporting child abuse or neglect unless the child is under sixteen (16) years of age or is an incapacitated person. However, if a mandated reporter knows or has reason to believe that an unaccompanied child has been or may be a victim of child abuse or neglect, a report must be made. Employees, volunteers and school contractors making reports of allegations of sexual abuse of a student will be provided immediate unrestricted use of communication technology and will be temporarily released from their work duties to make an immediate report.

If a school employee, volunteer or school contractor has a reasonable belief that a student has been or maybe subjected to abuse or neglect, such employee, volunteer or school contractor and the Superintendent shall report the information immediately upon receiving the information to the Children's Division. Thereafter, the Superintendent will investigate the allegation for the purpose of making decisions about the accused person's employment. Depending upon the specific facts, the District may place the alleged abuser on paid leave of absence; place the employee in a non-student contact position; initiate dismissal proceedings, or continue the employee in their present position pending outcome of the investigation.

Any school district employee, volunteer or school contractor acting in good faith, who reports alleged sexual misconduct on the part of a school employee will not be disciplined or discriminated against because of such reporting.

The District will annually provide employee and volunteer training, which will include but not be limited to current information concerning identification of the signs of sexual abuse in children as well as the identification of the danger signals of potentially abusive relationships between children and adults. This training will emphasize the importance of mandatory child abuse reporting, including the obligation to report suspected abuse by other mandated reporters. Employees and volunteers will receive training on the need for and methods to create an atmosphere of trust so that students believe their school and school employees are available to discuss matters concerning abusive behavior.

The District will post in each student restroom and in a clearly visible location in each school office, the toll free child abuse and neglect hotline number established by the Children's Division. These signs will be published in both English and Spanish. Such child abuse and neglect hotline numbers shall be depicted in large print on posters 11 inches by 17 inches and will be placed at

eye level for easy viewing. The hotline number will be shown in bold print. The signs shall also contain instructions to call 911 for emergencies and contain directions for accessing the Children's Division's website for more information on reporting abuse and neglect.

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