

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY

The Pulaski Community School District recognizes that the most important role of the school in today's society is to provide students with the best possible opportunities for educational success. The Board also recognizes that children who are abused and/or neglected not only are harmed physically and emotionally, but also educationally. The Board is committed to providing a positive environment with the school and positive environments in the home and in the community. As a part of this commitment, the Board establishes the following policy for reporting any suspected or threatened child abuse or neglect according to Wisconsin Statutes 48.981.

The Board requires that all staff members report the following situations or conditions as described in Wisconsin Statutes 48.981.

Any mandated reporter having reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen during professional duties has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect will occur shall report.

A "mandated reporter" for the purpose of this policy is any school employee or persons required to report in s. 48.981 (2).

"Abuse" includes physical injury, sexual abuse, and conduct causing emotional damage. Physical injury means injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. Physical injury includes, but is not limited to, lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, and severe or frequent bruising. Sexual abuse includes sexual intercourse or contact, sexual exploitation, or permitting or allowing or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution. Emotional damage means harm to a child's psychological or intellectual functioning that is exhibited by anxiety, depression, or aggression. Emotional damage may be demonstrated by observable changes in the child's behavior or in emotional responses or learning incompatible with the child's age or stage of development.

"Neglect" is the refusal or inability by the child's parent, legal guardian, or other person exercising temporary or permanent control over the child for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care, or shelter to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.

It is the policy of the Pulaski Community School District to require all district staff members who have knowledge of, or who suspect child abuse or neglect, or threat of child abuse or neglect situations to report by phone or personally to the appropriate county department of social services. If the child's abuse or neglect is life threatening, the staff member is first to make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency and request an immediate investigation.

The law requires that the facts and circumstances contributing to a suspicion of child abuse or neglect, or a belief that a child abuse or neglect will occur, be conveyed to the appropriate county social services department or the local law enforcement agency.

The law grants immunity from civil or criminal liability to reporters making a report in good faith.

Under the provisions of this policy, no administrator or other school district staff member may prevent or attempt to prevent another district staff member from making a report of alleged child abuse or neglect.

A provision of this policy is that no administrator or other school district staff member may require or attempt to require that district staff member desiring to make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect be required to change any aspect of that report.

The Board shall not take any disciplinary action against a district staff member who makes a report of suspected child abuse or neglect. Disciplinary action may result from the failure of a district staff member to report suspected child abuse or neglect of which they have knowledge.

This policy ensures the Pulaski Community School District will maintain as confidential all information pertaining to the suspected child abuse or neglect report and will share that information only with those individuals provided for under Wisconsin Statutes 48.981.

The Pulaski Community School District shall conduct review sessions for all staff regarding this policy on a yearly basis. Those persons who are mandatory under s 48.981, Wisconsin Statutes, shall be required to attend. All district staff will be given a copy of the child abuse and neglect reporting procedures each year.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect:

District staff members who are required by law to make a report may consult with other district staff before making a report, but may not delay the report beyond the time the student leaves the supervision of school staff on the day that the suspicion of abuse or neglect occurs. Always, it should be the aim of the district staff member to make the report of his/her concerns to the appropriate child protection agency as quickly as possible. Any delay would not be in the best interest of the child.

District staff members making a report of child abuse or neglect shall inform the building principal of their intention to do so. If the building principal is unavailable, the individual making the report shall contact the next administrator in the chain of command. The building principal or other administrator that is contacted, shall support the staff member in their action and shall not attempt to delay, modify, or prevent any report of suspected child maltreatment.

The district staff member may request consultation from other district staff members, such as pupil services staff about the reporting process and the necessary follow-up.

The report of suspected child abuse, including the name of the reporter, the name of the alleged victim, and the content of the report, shall be kept confidential from all staff and other persons not authorized under s48.981, Wisconsin Statutes.

Staff members who divulge such information to an unauthorized person or persons are liable for disciplinary action from the Board as well as the penalties provided in s 48.981, Wisconsin Statutes.

When making the report the district staff member shall provide as much of the following information as possible:

- The staff member's name, position, relationship to the child, and school phone number;
- The name, home address, and age of the child suspected of being maltreated;
- The name, home address, work place, and home phone number of the alleged victim's parent(s);
- The names and ages of the alleged victim's siblings;
- A brief description of why you believe that the child is abused or neglected or is threatened with abuse or neglect, the child's statements made to the reporter or to others, and any surrounding circumstances and conditions in the home of which the reporter is aware.

Policy Approved: September 9, 1986
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