REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Public School District Liaison

The superintendent shall designate a specific person or persons to serve as the public school liaison(s) and forward that information to the local division office of the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services. The liaison(s) shall develop protocol in conjunction with the chief investigator of the local division office to ensure information regarding the status of a child abuse or neglect investigation is shared with appropriate school personnel. All written information received by any public school district liaison or the school shall be subject to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The liaison(s) or designee may also serve on multidisciplinary teams used in providing protective or preventive social services along with law enforcement, the juvenile officer, the juvenile court and other agencies, both public and private.

Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect

The Board of Education requires its staff members to comply with the state child abuse and neglect laws and the mandatory reporting of suspected neglect and/or abuse. Any school official or employee acting in his or her official capacity who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or who observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, will immediately make a report to the school principal or designee, including any report of excessive absences that may indicate educational neglect. The school principal or designee will then become responsible for making a report via the Child Abuse Hotline to the CD, as required by law. This policy does not preclude any employee from directly reporting abuse or neglect to the CD. However, the school official or employee must notify the school principal or designee immediately after making a report.

The school principal will make the superintendent aware that a report has been made, and will keep him or her aware of the status of the case. If the school principal or designee has reason to believe that a victim of such abuse or neglect is a resident of another state or was injured as a result of an act that occurred in another state, then, in addition to notifying the Missouri the CD pursuant to this policy, he or she may also make a report to the child protection agency with the authority to receive such reports, pursuant to law, in the other state.

The district, as a mandated reporter, will be entitled, upon request, to information on the general disposition of the report. The district may also receive findings and information concerning the case, if requested. The information may be shared with the staff member who originated the report, but will not be released to anyone else without written authorization from the CD. Parents/Guardians will be referred to the CD for information regarding the investigation.

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Any person who in good faith participates in the making of such reports, or in any judicial proceeding resulting therefrom, will be immune from civil or criminal liability. It shall not be the responsibility of the school official or employee who initiated the report to prove that the child has been neglected or abused.

Investigating Child Abuse/Neglect

When the CD receives a child abuse report alleging that an employee of a school district has abused a student, the report is immediately referred to the superintendent (or the president of the School Board in situations concerning the superintendent), who will conduct an initial investigation. Findings and conclusions will be issued as required by law.

All other reports of any nature will be immediately returned to the CD for investigation, and the superintendent will take no further action.

The superintendent will prepare and implement procedures as necessary to accomplish the intent of this policy and of the law.

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Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.

Adopted: 10/14/1996

Revised: 02/12/2001; 09/13/2004; 05/08/2006; 02/13/2012

Cross Refs: GBH, Staff/Student Relations

Legal Refs: §§ 160.261, 210.110 - .165, RSMo.
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g

Columbia School District No. 93, Columbia, Missouri

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