Purpose: To establish the basic structure for the reporting of child abuse.

The schools of this district will cooperate vigorously to expose the problems of child abuse and neglect.

Any principal, assistant principal, school teacher, school attendance officer, computer technician, nurse or counselor who has received information in his/her professional capacity which gives him/her reason to believe that the physical or mental health or welfare of a child under the age of 18 has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must report such a situation. These individuals may call or make the report to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides or to the county Department of Social Services. Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect may be made by telephone or otherwise reported to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides or to the county Department of Social Services.

Other school employees who have reason to believe that a child under the age of 18 has been subjected to, or who may be subjected to, physical abuse or neglect, may also report or cause a report to be made as stated above.

The State of South Carolina provides both civil and criminal immunity to those reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. Anyone required to report who knowingly fails to do so may be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Reporting Procedures

School personnel who suspect child abuse or neglect may make a report in good faith. It is not the responsibility of school personnel to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, or to make a determination of whether the child is in need of protection. Any involvement of school personnel in investigation or treatment should be in conjunction with the local child protection unit of the department of social services.

The teacher or other school employee first suspecting the abuse must make an oral report to law enforcement agency or to the Department of Social Service by telephoning or otherwise. The report must include the following: by telephoning or otherwise which includes the following information:

- name, address and age of student
- name and address of parent/guardian or caretaker
- nature and extent of injuries or description of neglect
any other information that might help to establish the cause of the injuries or condition

The person making the report should tell the principal of the school of any oral or written report submitted in a case of suspected child abuse or neglect.

School employees who make reports of suspected child abuse and neglect must maintain the confidentiality of the information contained in the report. Employees will release this information only to the department of social services and/or, in the alternative, the county law enforcement agency.

Option: District Liaison

The superintendent or his/her designee will designate a specific person or persons to serve as the district liaison and forward that information to the local child protection unit of the Department of Social Services.

It will be the responsibility of the liaison to arrange for training and information necessary to assist staff members in identifying possible instances of child abuse and neglect, including annual updates regarding any changes in the law. Additionally, the liaison is charged with implementing a planned program of personal safety and awareness education, including methods for preventing sexual abuse, which will be provided to staff, students, and parent/legal guardians.

Adopted 6/27/78; Revised 7/1/03.

Legal references:

S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:

Section 63-1-10 - et seq. - South Carolina Children's Code.

Section 63-7-20 - Definitions.

Section 36-7-310 through 350 - Persons required to report.