

CHILD ABUSE

Background

Children, as a matter of right, are to be safe, secure and cared for adequately. While parents have primary responsibility to ensure the welfare of their children, the Division and its employees have a particular responsibility beyond that of the general public. Therefore, it is the obligation of all Division personnel to be guided by legislation/regulation with respect to child abuse and to report any suspected cases to Children's Services and/or the RCMP.

The Assistant Superintendent, Learning Services is responsible for the administration of this administrative procedure.

Procedures

1. Legal Duty to Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse

- 1.1 Anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been, or there is substantial risk that s/he will be abused or neglected by a parent/guardian, has a legal duty under legislation/regulation to promptly report the matter to a delegated worker with Children's Services.
- 1.2 It is not up to an individual to determine if the disclosure or indicators of abuse are sufficient evidence for an investigation. That decision is made by the caseworker in consultation with his/her supervisor.
- 1.3 The obligation to report is not discharged until the individual who has observed the indicators of abuse has reported directly to a delegated work with Children's Services.

2. Deciding to Report – Responding to a Disclosure

- 2.1 A disclosure made by a child to an individual must be recorded by that individual in the child's own words. The record is to include observed facts such as the child's behaviour, actions, comments, persons present at the time of the incident and physical marks. No further interviewing is to occur and the child's parent/guardians are not to be contacted. The exception to this is when Children's Services notes that the information provided does not fall within legislation/regulation. In this event, and if appropriate, the Family School Liaison Counsellor (FSLC) with support of the Counselling Coordinator will share the information disclosed with the family. However, upon receiving the information the family must due diligence to keep the child(ren) safe or Children's Services must be notified.
- 2.2 The individual is encouraged to collaborate with the Principal and Family School Liaison Counsellor (FSLC) prior to making a report, however, this will not limit a report being made in a timely manner.
- 2.3 A Principal or any other person cannot direct an individual **not** to make a report to Children's Services.

3. Making A Report

- 3.1 Reports are to be made to a caseworker at Children's Services. If unable to reach the office, call the Child Abuse Hotline.

Children's Services – High River Office - 403-652-8360
Calgary and Area After-Hours – 403- 297-2995
Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-638-0715

4. Confidentiality/Record Keeping

- 4.1 All personnel are expected to respect the child and family's right to privacy throughout the reporting and investigation procedures.
- 4.2 Notes, reports or written observations regarding alleged abuse or neglect are to be kept separate from the student's school record and any other record accessible to other staff.
- 4.3 Any record made regarding alleged or reported abuse is to be kept secure and disclosed only to police, RCMP or Children's Services during the investigation process.

5. Child, Youth and Family Enhancement interviewing on School Property

- 5.1 The Children's Services may, during the course of an investigation, request permission from the Principal to interview the child on school premises. School personnel are expected to cooperate with the request.
- 5.2 The assessor/caseworker may ask, in the presence of a school staff member, if the child wishes a staff member to be present during the interview, as an observer only, not as an interviewer. Unless agreed to by the child and the Children's Services worker, school personnel are not to participate in the interview.
- 5.3 Prior to leaving the school, the assessor/caseworker is to notify the Principal or designate of the plan for the child. The caseworker will notify the parents/guardian of the interview, school staff are not to fulfill this role.

6. Follow-up Communication between Child and Family Services and Division Personnel

- 6.1 Children's Services is to ensure the Principal or designate will be given any necessary information needed to provide education services to children involved in their services.

Reference: Relevant Legislation & Guidelines