

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

As a social resource the school is second only to the family unit in its potential for sustained, thorough involvement in a child's life. Because of this sustained contact, school personnel are in an excellent position to identify abused or neglected children and to refer them for treatment and protection.

To combat the child abuse and neglect problem and in compliance with state law, any district teacher, counselor, nurse, social worker, or administrator or other district employee required by law to report having reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen in the course of professional duties has been abused or neglected, has been threatened or has been exposed to an environment where methamphetamines have been manufactured, used, or distributed, shall immediately contact the county social services department, the county sheriff, or the city police, and inform the agency contacted of the facts and circumstances which lead to the filing of the report.

It is not the responsibility of school personnel to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, nor to determine whether the child is in need of protection. School personnel shall not contact the child's family or any other person to determine the cause of any suspected abuse or neglect.

No district employee shall be discharged from employment for making such a report. In addition, state law guarantees immunity from any civil or criminal liability that may result from making a report on child abuse or neglect. State law also provides for the protection of the identity of any individual who makes such a report.

The district administrator shall establish any necessary procedures to implement this policy and to comply with state law. The district administrator shall also incorporate into the annual in-service program at least one session on the detection of indicators of child abuse or neglect.

Because failure to report is punishable by a fine and/or jail sentence, this policy shall annually be distributed as widely as possible by means such as posting or publishing, and shall be included in the employee handbook.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Wisconsin Stats. 48.02, 48.981