

## STUDENTS

### Procedures in Assessing and Reporting Child Neglect and/or Abuse

The School Board recognizes, because of their sustained contact with school age children, school employees are in an excellent position to identify abused or neglected children and to refer them for treatment and protection. To comply with the mandatory reporting of child abuse (Wisconsin Statute 48.981 as revised by 1983 Wisconsin Act 172 and 1983 Wisconsin Act 190), it is the policy of the School Board that any school teacher, counselor, administrator, speech therapist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, or school psychologist having reasonable cause to suspect that a child, seen in the course of professional duties, has been abused, or neglected, or having reason to believe that a child seen in the course of professional duties, has been threatened with an injury shall immediately contact by telephone, or in person, the County Social Services Agency, Sheriff or City Police Department and in the case of American Indian children, the tribal government. All other school personnel may report such cases to the above mentioned agencies. All school personnel shall inform appropriate administrative personnel of all cases of suspected or believed abuse, neglect, or threatened abuse.

Any person reporting may request an immediate investigation by the Sheriff or Police Department if the person has reason to suspect that the child's health or safety is in immediate danger. The reporter should be prepared to give the following information: name, address and age of student; name and address of parent or caretaker; nature and extent of injuries or description of neglects; and other information that might help establish the causes of the injuries or condition. School personnel may professionally conduct a brief interview or a physical inspection. Any physical inspection shall be in the presence of an appropriate witness to obtain enough information to suspect or believe that neglect, abuse, or threatened abuse has occurred. Only suspicion or a belief is required for mandated reporting. 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.

Indications of child abuse and/or neglect are listed below and should be considered in suspected or believed cases:

- I. Abuse
  - a) physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means
  - b) (am) when used in referring to an unborn child, serious physical harm inflicted on the unborn child, and the risk of serious physical harm to the child when born, caused by the habitual lack of self-control of the expectant mother of the unborn child in the use of alcohol beverages, controlled substances or controlled substance analogs, exhibited to a severe degree under Wisconsin Statute 48.02(1)(am)
  - c) sexual intercourse or sexual contact under Wisconsin Statute 940.225, 948.02, 948.025, or 948.085
  - d) violation of sexual exploitation under Wisconsin Statute 948.05
  - e) permitting or requiring a child to violate prostitution laws under Wisconsin Statute 944.30
  - f) causing a child to view or listen to sexual activity under Wisconsin Statute 948.055
  - g) exposing genitals or pubic area under Wisconsin Statute 948.10
  - h) manufacturing methamphetamine in violation of s. 961.41 (1) (e) under any of the following circumstances:
    - a. with a child physically present during the manufacture under Wisconsin Statute 48.02(1)(g)1.
    - b. in a child's home, on the premises of a child's home, or in a motor vehicle located on the premises of a child's home under Wisconsin Statute 48.02(1)(g)2.
    - c. Under any other circumstances in which a reasonable person should have known that the manufacture would be seen, smelled, or heard by a child under Wisconsin Statute 48.02(1)(g)3.
  - i) (gm) emotional damage for which the child's parent, guardian or legal custodian has neglected, refused or been unable for reasons other than poverty to obtain the necessary treatment or to take steps to ameliorate the symptoms under Wisconsin Statute 48.02(1)(gm)

- a. "Emotional damage" means harm to a child's psychological or intellectual functioning. "Emotional damage" shall be evidenced by one or more of the following characteristics exhibited to a severe degree: anxiety; depression; withdrawal; outward aggressive behavior; or a substantial and observable change in behavior, emotional response or cognition that is not within the normal range for the child's age and stage of development.

II. Neglect

- a) failure, refusal, or inability on the part of the parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other person exercising temporary or permanent control over a child for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care, or shelter so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.

W.S.S. protect individuals reporting child neglect and abuse as follows:

Any person participating in good faith in the making of a report shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that results by reasons of the action. No person making a report may be discharged from employment for so doing.

Persons who are required to report and willfully fail to report may be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than 6 months or both. All reported cases of suspected and believed abuse and neglect or threatened abuse will be held in confidence.

Reports and records may be disclosed only to agencies or persons as outlined in state statutes. It is recommended that any person reporting develop and maintain personal notes regarding the situation.

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