

Reporting Suspected and Actual Child Abuse & Neglect

Under this policy and Ohio law, all employees are *required* to report child abuse when the employee knows of or *has reasonable cause to believe* abuse or neglect has occurred to a child. The employee shall immediately (1) inform the School's Head Administrator and (2) report that knowledge or belief to either the children services agency or a municipal or county peace officer. The School shall assist the employee in creating the report, but Ohio law requires each employee to make the report directly.

"Abuse or neglect" is defined to include any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child.

"Child" or "Children" are defined to include those under eighteen (18) years of age or a developmentally disabled or physically impaired child under twenty-one (21) years of age.

Employees are *required* to report suspected cases if they cannot confirm abuse or neglect, but have a "good faith" belief that child abuse or neglect has occurred or may occur. Ohio law provides School employees that make reports in good faith complete immunity, civil or criminal, in participating in the making of a report.

Failure to make a required report may result in disciplinary and legal action.

Reports

Reports to the authorities may be made in telephone or in person.

If the receiving agency or receiving officer requests a report, the written report must contain the following: (1) the names and addresses of the child and the child's parents or the person or persons having custody of the child, if known; (2) the child's age and the nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, or neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed, to have occurred or of the threat of injury, abuse, or neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed to exist; (3) any other information that might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury, abuse, or neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed to have occurred or of the threat of injury, abuse, or neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed, as to exist; (4) an employee, with the consent of the Head Administrator may take or cause to be taken color photographs of areas of trauma visible on a child.

Confidentiality

The School recognizes the importance of confidentiality in making reports. Ohio law provides that the report and its contents are confidential. Additionally, the reporting person's identity will remain confidential unless the reporting person discloses his/her identity or a court order requires it. Finally the identity of the student that suffered the alleged abuse will remain confidential.

Any individual that violates this policy may be subject to disciplinary, civil, and/or criminal action.

Training

To ensure that employees are aware of the severity of abuse and to aid them in identifying instances of abuses, the School and Ohio law require in-service training (Training). Training is required for all teachers, counselors, school psychologists, nurses and administrators. Each staff member complete at least four (4) hours of Training within two (2) years of commencing employment with the School, and at least four (4) additional hours every five (5) years thereafter.

The training shall address the School's policy on harassment; intimidation; & bullying, preventing child abuse, violence, substance abuse, promoting positive youth development, school safety, and suicide awareness and prevention. The Training's curriculum shall be developed either by the School or the Ohio Department of Education. For middle school and high school employees, the School's training shall also include training in preventing dating violence, which will be developed by the School.

Human Trafficking

Approximately one-third of all human trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline involve minor victims. The US Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Education both recognize human trafficking as a form of violence against children that needs to be addressed in school settings.

All employees of the School shall be aware of the signs of human trafficking as set forth in the Ohio Department of Health's resources for school nurses. These may be found at the links set forth below:

<https://www.odh.ohio.gov/-/media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/chss/school-nursing/2014-PROTOCOL-FlowChart.pdf?la=en>

<https://www.odh.ohio.gov/-/media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/chss/school-nursing/2014-PROTOCOL-General-Info.pdf?la=en>

<https://www.odh.ohio.gov/-/media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/chss/school-nursing/2014-Definitions.pdf?la=en>

Possible behavioral indicators of a child human trafficking victim include:

- An inability to attend school on a regular basis and/or unexplained absences
- Frequently running away from home
- References made to frequent travel to other cities

- Bruises or other signs of physical trauma, withdrawn behavior, depression, anxiety, or fear
- Lack of control over a personal schedule and/or identification or travel documents
- Hunger, malnourishment, or inappropriate dress (based on weather conditions or surroundings)
- Signs of drug addiction
- Coached or rehearsed responses to questions
- A sudden change in attire, behavior, relationships, or material possessions (e.g., expensive items)
- Uncharacteristic promiscuity and/or references to sexual situations or terminology beyond age-specific norms
- A “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” who is noticeably older and/or controlling
- An attempt to conceal scars, tattoos, or bruises
- A sudden change in attention to personal hygiene
- Tattoos (a form of branding) displaying the name or moniker of a trafficker, such as “daddy”
- Hyperarousal or symptoms of anger, panic, phobia, irritability, hyperactivity, frequent crying, temper tantrums, regressive behavior, and/or clinging behavior
- Symptoms of daydreaming, inability to bond with others, inattention, forgetfulness, and/or shyness

Ohio: R.C. 2151.421, R.C. 3319.073, O.A.C. 3301-57-01.

Cross Reference: Policy 5441, Staff and Student Boundaries.