

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The District is committed to providing a positive environment within our schools and assisting families and community child protection agencies to provide positive environments in the home and community.

Our professional educators and support staff occupy a unique position as the most constant and perceptive observers of the emotional, social and intellectual growth of Evansville school children. Because of this pivotal role, their assistance is crucial to help give abused/neglected children and their families the professional protection and treatment they need.

The District requires that staff members or administrators having reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen in the course of professional duties has been abused or neglected, shall immediately report the suspicion or belief to appropriate authorities. In the event they believe a child has been threatened with abuse or neglect or that it will occur, shall immediately report that suspicion or belief to the appropriate authorities.

Definitions: The following definitions are to assist in defining suspected abuse or neglect:

1. "Abuse" means any physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. "Physical injury" includes, but is not limited to, severe bruising, lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries or any other injury constituting great bodily harm. Abuse also includes sexual intercourse, sexual contact or sexual exploitation.
2. "Neglect" means failure, refusal or inability on the part of a 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.
3. "Emotional damage" means harm to the child's psychological or intellectual functioning which is exhibited by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or outward aggressive behavior, or a combination of those behaviors, which is caused by the child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person exercising temporary or permanent control over the child and for which the child's parent, guardian or legal custodian has failed to obtain the treatment necessary to remedy the harm. "Emotional damage" may be demonstrated by 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.

Staff may wish to consult their building principal, or pupil services staff for assistance in the reporting process. The principal or pupil services staff shall support the staff member in their action and shall not attempt to delay, modify, or prevent any employee from making a report. The reporter has no obligation to prove that child abuse or neglect has occurred. The burden of proof shall be left to trained investigators.

Reports shall be directed to the Rock County Human Services Department. If a report to that department is not possible, it should be directed to the Rock County Sheriff's Department or local

law enforcement agency. If the abuse or neglect is life threatening, staff should first report to the law enforcement agency and request an immediate investigation. The School District shall maintain as confidential any and all information pertaining to suspected child abuse or neglect reports and will share that information only as permitted under state laws and regulations.

Discipline action may result from the failure of a district employee to report suspected child abuse or neglect of which they have knowledge.

Legal Ref.: Sections 48.02 Wisconsin Statutes (Definitions)  
48.981 (Abused or Neglected Children and Abused Unborn Children)  
118.01(2)(d)8 (Educational Goals)  
118.125 (Pupil Records)  
118.126 (Privileged Communications)

Local Ref.: Policy #454.1, Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect, Administrative Guidelines  
Policy #454.1 Form, Child Protective Services Referral