

Purpose/Background

Children have the right to be safe, secure, and receive adequate care at home, at school, and in the community. All staff are to respond to suspected or alleged child abuse and neglect. This must be in compliance with the provisions of the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and in cooperation with directors of Alberta Social Services and the police in their investigations of child abuse and neglect cases.

Procedures

1. The Associate Superintendent of Schools has the responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of the obligations to report under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.
2. Division employees are required to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities in accordance with the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.
 - 2.1 The Child Abuse Hotline may be contacted anytime at 1-800-387-KIDS (5437).
3. The safety and welfare of the students are of paramount concern in addressing cases of suspected child abuse. Reports of suspected abuse shall remain confidential on the basis of those who need to know in order to protect the safety and welfare of the child.
4. The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* prescribes penalties for those who fail to report such situations, and provides protection against a person making a report unless the reporting "is done maliciously or without reasonable and probable grounds for the belief".
5. Case workers and police may have access to students in certain circumstances when the students are alleged victims of abuse or neglect. In such special circumstances, Assessors are expected to consider the convenience of school and student when seeking times for access.
 - 6.1 Case workers advise that, in the interests of confidentiality and full and undistorted disclosure, it is appropriate for assessors and students to meet alone.
 - 6.2 If a student requests that a staff member be present, the Principal shall comply with the request.
6. The Principal may ask case workers and police to present identification, provide an explanation of the nature of the investigation being proposed, and to state reasons for conducting the investigation at school.
7. Responsibility for notifying parents about an investigation shall be the responsibility of the out-of-school assessors.
 - 8.1 The Principal shall clarify with the assessor when contact will be made with the parent.
 - 8.2 The Principal shall provide the name of the assessor to the parent in those cases where students are in the care of the investigator.

8. It is possible that allegations of child abuse may be made against teachers or other school personnel. In all such cases, the Principal and the Superintendent shall be informed whether the report originates in the school or elsewhere.
9. Where the suspected abuse involves the Principal, the employee shall immediately report the situation to the Superintendent.
10. If threats are made against school personnel or the student, the Principal shall contact the police.
11. The Principal shall submit a written report to the Superintendent.
12. The delivery of child personal safety programs is approved and supported in Division schools. Staff are to ensure that parents are aware of the programs and their contents.

Reference:

- School Act
- Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Practice Review of Teachers Regulation 4/99
- Student Record Regulation 225/2006