



**BC CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
CHILD ABUSE REPORTING
BY CERTIFIED PERSONNEL POLICY**

SUBJECT: Child Abuse Reporting by Certified Personnel	EFFECTIVE: October 31, 1997	PAGES: 5 [1 of 5]
DEPARTMENT: All Staff	REVISED: September 30, 2016	APPROVED BY: Administration

Child Abuse and/or Neglect

1. Reporting and Investigation Procedures

By law, responsibility for reporting rests with the person who has reasonable grounds to suspect abuse. This responsibility is not discharged by an employee reporting to any person other than an appropriate delegate of the Ministry of Social Services. Any individual making such a report is exempt from liability unless he/she makes the report maliciously or without reasonable grounds.

The investigation of a complaint that a child may have been abused is the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Social Services and the police. These responsibilities cannot be assumed by school district personnel. An integrated response requires that an investigating social worker and/or police officer will request co-operation from school personnel who have knowledge of the situation and will endeavor to provide feedback regarding the outcome of the investigation.

In cases where it is suspected that a child has been abused, the procedures outlined below are to be followed:

- a) All school employees, alerted for signs of child abuse, shall promptly report their suspicions to a social worker within the local ministry of Social Services office, and notify the school principal of their actions. The Ministry of Social Services will report to the police whenever it appears that abuse may have occurred.
- b) Statements made to school employees should be recorded in the child's own words. School employees, while offering support, should refrain from interviewing the child after receiving the child's first disclosure. Interviews will be conducted by police and/or Ministry of Social Services personnel. In the event that the child has a disabling condition which impedes his ability to communicate (for example, is hearing impaired), steps should be taken to locate an individual who is familiar with the disabling condition, to assist with interviewing the child.

- c) The principal should not detain a child at school after school hours for the social worker to interview or apprehend unless an interview has already begun while school was in session. Social workers making a request for an interview or apprehension should be advised that whenever possible, the interview or apprehension should be completed during the regular school hours.
- d) Although an employee may be requested to be present during an interview to provide support to the child, an employee is not required to be present when the child is interviewed. This situation is not parallel to that described in Schools Department circular no. 101, 79, 10, 23, in which police officers interview the child in the course of investigating an alleged offence by the child. In that case, the principal or teacher is acting “in loco parentis”, to ensure the protection of the child’s rights. A social worker may interview a student in a school when investigating child abuse under the legislative mandate for the protection of children.
- e) When there is reason to believe that an abuse situation exists, employees should not contact parents. The responsibility for contacting the parents of the child who is allegedly abused or neglected rests with the investigating social worker or police officer.

2. Interview and/or apprehensions requested by the social worker

- a. Only those social workers designated by the Superintendent of Child Welfare pursuant to Section 7(1) of the Family and Child Services Act and police officers may interview or apprehend a child in need of protection.
- b. The principal shall determine whether anyone seeking to interview or apprehend a child is, in fact, authorized to do so before complying with the request. (N.B. Police officers and authorized social workers have appropriate identification cards)
- c. When faced with a request to interview a child at school, the principal should advise the investigating social worker of any information which might make it inadvisable to do so in terms of suitability of location or timing.
- d. Should a parent or legal guardian contact the principal while a child is being interviewed, the principal should seek guidance from the social worker or refer the parents or legal guardian to the Ministry of Social Services.
- e. Employees should keep an accurate record of all that transpires in these cases insofar as their involvement is concerned (date, time, names of people involved, child’s own words should be recorded, etc.) pertinent information shall be shared with the investigating social worker or police officer. All information should be filed for later use. (Official hearings, etc.)
- f. All written reports and records must be treated confidentially and should not be placed in the child’s records or cumulative file.

3. Where the alleged offender is a school employee

Where the alleged offender is a school employee, the school should advise the Board of the circumstances. The Board shall then determine if suspension, discipline or dismissal of the employee is warranted. The alleged offender may immediately be suspended with pay, whether or not criminal charges are laid. The suspension will be in effect until the legal process is completed, at which time the alleged offender will either be reinstated or terminated.



**BC CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
NEW MINISTRY RESOURCES AND POLICIES
ON RESPONSE TO CHILD ABUSE
“The BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect”
and
“Supporting Our Students”**

Objectives of “Supporting Our Students”:

- Understand what Child abuse is and its effects on victims.
- Recognize situations in which abuse be occurring.
- Understand the role of school personnel in responding to abuse.
- Identify key personnel and other resources for dealing with abuse and the processes of collaboration.
- Inform them about the legislation and policies governing child abuse and procedures for dealing with it within education.

Objectives of Handbook:

- Consistent Response.
- Collaboration.
- Accountability.
- Overview of current Law and Policies (1996 Child Protection Legislation, New Ministries, Ministry of Children and Families).

Materials Include:

- Definitions, Indicators, Response to Disclosures, Confidentiality.
- Protocols for Four Different Scenarios.
- Applicable Law.
- Video.
- Collaborative Processes.

Important Changes to Note:

- Definition of Abuses now includes Emotional Abuse --- defined as a pattern of scape goating, rejection, verbal attacks on the child, threats, insults or humiliation, and / or acts of omission, which are likely to produce serious emotional damage. Emotional harm is demonstrated by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or self-destructive or aggressive behaviour in a child.

- Protocol template attempts to build collaboration and has a set of guiding principles that address the concerns adults may have in reporting disclosures to the Ministry (i.e. sensitive to the needs and the cultural, racial, and religious heritage of the children involved, making the safety and well-being of children paramount). Details of the protocol template are to be worked out with the Superintendent of each school district to ensure community sensitivity and involvement. Sets out the expectations of the parties in three key areas: reporting, investigations and information sharing.
- Emphasizes the legal duty to report. This duty belongs to the person who first becomes aware of possible child abuse or who has a reasonable belief that a child may be abused. The duty cannot be passed on to a principal or counselor. Failure to report carries a maximum penalty of \$ 10,000 fine and/or up to six months in jail. Also open to civil lawsuits. Note: You are liable for up to 75 years.
- Role of Principal: To support and debrief, not to report for the teacher or to determine whether something is reported.

Scenario Example:

**Teacher notices severe bruising on a child's back legs. Asks the child about it....
The child discloses.**

Protocol Steps:

1. The Report to Ministry of Children and Families.
2. Document the Information and Notify the Principal. Secure and maintain confidentiality.
3. The Investigations: Cooperate with MCF and/or Police (be careful to verify person coming from MCF. Ask for ID----- driver's license or phone the MCF office to confirm that person actually works for MCF!)
4. Do not contact Parents (MCF or Police contact).
5. Support your students (listen, monitor, consult with counselor, refer).
6. Go to Court (when subpoenaed).

Concerns for Christian School:

- Is this a protocol that works within a Christian Community? Any protocol that we develop must conform with relevant legislation and the duty to report.
- How will we collaborate in developing protocols for our local areas?
- How can we be more proactive in providing the support necessary for parents in order to prevent child abuse?