

## Reporting of Suspected Abuse of a Child

### Reporting

Any district employees having reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom the employee comes in contact has suffered abuse, or that any person with whom the employee comes in contact has abused a child, shall orally report or cause an oral report to be immediately made by telephone or otherwise to the local office of the Oregon Department of Human Services or to a law enforcement agency within the county where the person making the report is at the time of his/her contact. The district employee should also immediately inform his/her supervisor, principal or superintendent.

If known, such report shall contain the names and addresses of the child, the child's parents or other persons responsible for the child's care, the child's age, the nature and extent of the suspected abuse, the explanation given for the suspected abuse, any other information which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the possible cause of the suspected abuse and the identity of a possible perpetrator.

A written record of the abuse report shall be made by the employee suspecting the abuse of a child. The abuse of a child reporting form includes at a minimum:

1. The name and position of the person making the report;
2. The name, address of the child, the parents or other person responsible for the child's care;
3. The name and position of any witness to the report;
4. A description of the nature and extent of the abuse, including any information which could be helpful in establishing cause of abuse and identity of the abuser;
5. A description of how the report was made (i.e., phone or other method);
6. The name of the agency and individual who took the report;
7. The date and time that the report was made; and
8. The names of persons who received a copy of the written report.

The written record of the abuse report shall not be placed in the student's educational record. A copy of the written report shall be retained by the employee making the report and a copy shall be provided to the employee's supervisor principal or to the assistant superintendent if the employee is not assigned to a school site.

When the district receives a report of suspected abuse of a child by one of its employees, and the Assistant Superintendent determines that there is reasonable cause to support the report, the district shall place the district employee on paid administrative leave until the Department of Human services or a law enforcement agency either: 1) determines that the report is unfounded or that the report will not be pursued; or 2) determines that the report is founded and the education provider takes the appropriate disciplinary action against the district employee. If the Department of Human services or a law enforcement agency is unable to determine whether the abuse of a child occurred the district may either reinstate the employee or take disciplinary action at the district's discretion.

The written record of each reported incident of abuse of a child, action taken by the district and any findings as a result of the report shall be maintained by the district.

### **Definitions**

1. Oregon law recognizes these types of abuse:
  - a. Physical;
  - b. Neglect;
  - c. Mental injury;
  - d. Threat of harm;
  - e. Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
  
2. "Child" means an unmarried person who is under 18 years of age.

### **Confidentiality of Records**

The name, address and other identifying information about the employee who made the report are confidential and are not accessible for public inspection.

The disciplinary records of a district employee or former district employee convicted of a crime listed in Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 342.143 are not exempt from disclosure under ORS 192.501 or 192.502. Therefore, if a district employee or former employee is convicted of a crime listed in ORS 342.143, the district that is or was the employer of that employee when the crime was committed shall disclose the disciplinary records of the employee to any person upon request. However, prior to the disclosure of a disciplinary record the district shall remove any personally identifiable information from the record that would disclose the identity of a child, a crime victim or a district employee who is not the subject of the disciplinary record.

### **Failure to Comply**

Any school employee who fails to report a suspected abuse of a child as provided by this policy and the prescribed Oregon law commits a violation punishable by law. A school employee who fails to comply with the confidentiality of records requirements commits a violation punishable by the prescribed law. In addition, failure to comply shall constitute just cause for school district disciplinary action against the school employee who fails to report suspected abuse of a child or maintain confidentiality of records as required by this policy.

## **Cooperation with Investigator**

The district staff shall make every effort in suspected child abuse cases to cooperate with investigating officials as follows:

1. If the student is to be interviewed at the school, the principal or representative shall make a conference space available. The principal or representative of the school may at the discretion of the investigator, be present to facilitate the interview.

The investigator has the right to interview any student suspected of being abused alone without school personnel present. School personnel are not to let parents know that an interview is being done or has been done. Law enforcement officers wishing to interview or remove a student from the premises shall present themselves at the office and contact the principal or his/her representative. The officer shall sign the student out on a form to be provided by the school;

2. When the subject matter of the interview or investigation is identified to be related to suspected abuse of a child, school employees shall not notify parents;
3. The principal or his/her representative shall advise the investigator of any conditions of disability, if any, prior to any interview with the affected child;
4. A school administrator or staff member is not authorized to reveal anything that transpires during an investigation in which the administrator or staff member participates, nor shall the information become part of the child's school records, except that the school administrator or staff member may testify at any subsequent trial resulting from the investigation and may be interviewed by the respective litigants prior to any such trial.

## **Immunity from Civil and Criminal Liability**

Any school employee participating in good faith in the making of a report pursuant to this policy and Oregon law and who has reasonable grounds for the making thereof, shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed with respect to the making or content of any such report.