

Reporting of Suspected Abuse of a Child

1. Reporting

Any MESD 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 immediately 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 employee shall also immediately inform his/her supervisor or administrator that he/she made a report or caused a report to be made of suspected child abuse.

a. Oral or Written Report to DHS or Law Enforcement Agency

If known, the oral or written 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, and 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.

b. Written record of child abuse for MESD purposes

A written record of the abuse report shall also be made by the employee suspecting the abuse of a child. The written record include 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 how the report was made (i.e., phone or other method);
- (5) The name of the agency and individual who took the report;
- (6) The date and time that the report was made; and
- (7) 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 Superintendent.

c. Report of Child Abuse by an MESD Employee

When MESD receives a report of suspected abuse of a child by one of its employees, and the Superintendent determines that there is reasonable cause to support the report, MESD shall place the 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 further investigated; or
- (2) Determines that the report is founded and MESD takes the appropriate disciplinary action against the employee.

If the Department of Human Services or a law enforcement agency is unable to determine whether the abuse of a child occurred, MESD may either reinstate the employee or take disciplinary action at MESD's discretion.

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

2. Definitions

a. Oregon law recognizes the following types of abuse:

- (1) Physical;
- (2) Neglect;
- (3) Mental injury;
- (4) Threat of harm;
- (5) Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

b. Child means an unmarried person who is under 18 years of age.

3. 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 an MESD employee or former MESD employee convicted of a crime listed in ORS 342.143 are not exempt from disclosure under ORS 192.501 or 192.502. Therefore, if an MESD employee or former employee is convicted of a crime listed in ORS 342.143, MESD shall disclose the disciplinary records of any employee who is or was an MESD employee at the time when the crime was committed to any person upon request. However, prior to the disclosure of a disciplinary record MESD shall remove any personally identifiable information from the record that would disclose the identity of a child, a crime victim or an employee who is not the subject of the disciplinary record.

4. Failure to Comply

Any MESD 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 the prescribed law. An MESD employee who fails to comply with the confidentiality of records requirements commits a violation punishable by the prescribed law. If an employee fails to report suspected abuse of a child or fails to maintain confidentiality of records as required by this policy, the employee shall be disciplined up to and including discharge.

5. Cooperation with Investigator

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

- a. Any investigation of abuse of a child will be directed by the Oregon Department of Human Services or law enforcement officials as required by law. When a program supervisor or representative is notified that the Department of Human Services or law enforcement would like to interview a student at school or on ESD property, the program supervisor or representative must request that the investigating official demonstrate that he/she has a warrant, court order, exigent circumstances or parental consent to interview the student. Failure to meet one of these criteria may result in the program supervisor's or representative's refusal to allow the student interview on school or MESD property. If the student is to be interviewed at the school or on MESD property, the program supervisor or representative shall make a conference space available. The program supervisor or representative of the MESD may at the discretion of the investigator, be present to facilitate the interview. Law enforcement officers wishing to interview or remove a student from the premises shall present themselves at the office and contact the program supervisor or representative. The officer shall sign the student out on a form to be provided by the MESD.
- b. When the subject matter of the interview or investigation is identified to be related to suspected abuse of a child, MESD employees shall not notify parents.
- c. The program supervisor or representative shall advise the investigator of any conditions of disability prior to an interview with the affected child.
- d. MESD employees are not authorized to reveal anything that transpires during an investigation in which the employee participates, nor shall the information become part of the student's education records, except that the employee may testify at any subsequent trial resulting from the investigation and may be interviewed by the respective litigants prior to any such trial.