

## **Reporting of Suspected Abuse of a Child**

### **Reporting**

To facilitate the use of protective social services to prevent further abuse, and to safeguard and enhance the welfare of abused children, it is the policy of this district that all district employees shall promptly comply with the statutory requirements concerning the reporting of a suspected abuse of a child. In particular, all 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 (DHS) 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: 1) the names and addresses of the child; 2) the names of child's parents or other persons responsible for the child's care; 3) the child's age; 4) the nature and extent of the suspected abuse; 5) the explanation, if any, given by the child for the suspected abuse; 6) the identity of a possible perpetrator; and 7) any other information which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the possible cause of the suspected abuse.

The district will designate the assistant superintendent to receive reports of child abuse by school employees and specify the procedures to be followed upon receipt of a child abuse report. The district will post, in each school building, the name and contact information of the person designated to receive child abuse reports, as well as the procedures the assistant superintendent will follow upon receipt of a report. When the assistant superintendent takes action on the report, the person who initiated the report must be notified.

A written record of the abuse report shall be made by the employee suspecting the abuse of a child. The written record may be made using the Silver Falls School District abuse reporting form which 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 (e.g., 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 report 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, the superintendent and director of special services.

When the district receives a report of suspected child abuse by one of its employees, and the assistant superintendent determines that there is reasonable cause to support the report, the district shall place the school employee on paid administrative leave until the DHS 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 school employee. If the DHS or a law enforcement agency is unable to determine whether the child abuse 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 192.345 or 192.355. 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 district employee who fails to report a suspected child abuse as provided by this policy and the prescribed Oregon law commits a violation punishable by law. A district 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 child abuse or fails to maintain confidentiality of records as required by this policy, the employee will be disciplined.

### **Cooperation with Investigator**

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

1. Any investigation of abuse of a child will be directed by the DHS or law enforcement officials as required by law. When an administrator is notified that the DHS or law enforcement would like to interview a student at school, the administrator must request that the investigating official fill out the appropriate form. Failure to complete the appropriate form may result in the administrator's refusal to allow the student interview on school property. 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. Law enforcement officers wishing to interview or remove a student from the premises shall present themselves at the office and contact the principal or 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 child abuse, district employees shall not notify parents.
3. The principal or representative shall advise the investigator of any conditions of disability prior to any interview with the affected child.
4. District 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.