

Student Welfare: Child Abuse and Neglect

What is Child Abuse?

- Isolated incident and/or pattern by which the child is harmed:
 - Emotionally/psychologically
 - Physically
 - Sexually
- Can be displayed by threats of violence, intimidation, or physical contact

What is Neglect?

- Causing/ permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury resulting in observable and material impairment in child's:
 - Growth
 - Development
 - Psychological functioning
- Abandonment:
 - Leaving child in a situation where he/she may be exposed to substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging necessary care
 - Demonstration by the parent/guardian, of intent not to return

Responsibility to Report: Policy FFG Legal

- Duty to report by any person:
 - Any person who has cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare as been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as required by law.
- By a professional:
 - Any professional who has cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected shall make a report within 48 hours after the professional first suspects abuse or neglect.

Cont.

- A professional may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.
- A “professional” is a person who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees, and juvenile detention, or correctional officers.

Report the abuse to Child Protective Services:

➤ Phone: 1-800-252-5400

➤ Web

www.txabusehotline.org

➤ WITHIN 48 HOURS

➤ Important

- You are immune from civil and criminal liabilities if you make the report in GOOD FAITH
- You need to believe that the abuse/neglect really happened. Even if
 - The victim has a bad reputation
 - The victim is known to lie.

Consequences of not reporting suspected child abuse/neglect

- You

- May be placing child at risk of continued abuse/neglect
- Are violating the law and may be subject to legal penalties, including criminal sanctions;
 - Class A Misdemeanor
 - Arrested
- Are violating Board policy, subject to disciplinary action, including possible termination,
- Your certification may be suspended, revoked, or cancelled by the State Board of Educator Certification.

If perpetrator is LISD employee:

- Report the abuse to Child Protective Services
 - Phone: 1-800-252-5400
 - Web www.txabusehotline.org
 - **WITHIN 48 HOURS** (record confirmation number)
- Report abuse to your local enforcement agency (Recommended)
 - If offense occurred in LISD jurisdiction report to LISD police 795-3417
 - If offense occurred outside LISD jurisdiction report to Laredo Police 795-2800.

- When school administrator knows/is aware of “suspect”, he/she will
- Advise Human Resources who will notify Superintendent and
- Send LISD police investigator to meet with campus administrator and family of “victim”

LSD Investigator

- Will conduct investigation
- Confer with District attorney/county attorney
- Will present case at the Children's advocacy Center (CAC)
- Will present findings of CAC to Human Resources who will present to Superintendent

If family members come to school to report suspicion of abuse by LISD employee:

- Campus administration will
 - Report abuse to Child Protective Services
- Notify Human Resources who will notify Superintendent and
- Notify LISD police investigator
 - Who will report to campus, etc.

If perpetrator is not LISD employee

- Report abuse to child protective services by
 - Calling 1 800-252-5400 or
 - Web: www.txabusehotline.org within 48 hours
- Report abuse to local law enforcement agency (Recommended)

Do Not:

- Try to determine if the abuse really happened.
- Have the victim repeat to others what happened.
- Tell the family members that you will investigate.
- Question the witnesses.

DO:

- Tell them it's not their fault.
- Let them know you are glad they told.
- Not promise confidentiality.
- Encourage, don't force talking.

Remember

- Person reporting does not need to be certain that child is being abused or neglected, only to have a reason for believing
- Concerned citizens should not try to investigate or intervene in the suspected abuse themselves –
REPORT!
- Any time a child discloses abuse to an adult, the adult has reason to make a report