

Policy

BOARD OF EDUCATION
HORTONVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

In the event of a law enforcement or social services investigation involving allegations of child abuse under Chapter 48 of the Wisconsin Statutes, school officials shall permit access to any student the law enforcement officer or social services agent determines s/he must speak with.

Office staff shall notify the District Administrator or the building administrator of any such investigation and shall keep a log of activities by the agency conducting the investigation, noting the date, and time of any interviews and the students involved.

The school administration may notify the student's parents only after being advised by the agency conducting the investigation that parental/guardian contact will not impede their investigation. In some instances, such investigations may involve allegations against the student's parent(s) and the investigating agency may instruct the administration not to contact the parents/guardians unless and until authorized to do so by the investigating agency. The administration shall cooperate with such a request.

If the investigating agency determines that it must remove the student from school in the course of their investigation, the administrator should make a record of when the student was released, the agency to which the student was released and the name of the individual agent that removed the student.

Legal Reference
48.981, Wis. Stats.

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ABUSE (physical abuse, emotional damage, and sexual abuse) and NEGLECT (failure, refusal or inability on the part of a caregiver for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child (Wis. Stat 48.02(12g)).

1. All district employees are mandated reporters.
2. If there is suspected abuse or neglect, the mandated reporter must immediately (no time delay or waiting for a free period) call Child Protective Services (832-5161) or local law enforcement (Wis. Stat 48.981 (2)(a)1. If an administrator is available to assist in the reporting process immediately, the phone call can be made with both the teacher and administrator present.
3. The reporter should report the following information:
 - A. Reporter's name, position, school, school phone number
 - ~~B.~~ If known, where the abuse or neglect occurred
 - C. Child's name, address, and age
 - D. Report's relationship to the child
 - E. Parent's name, address, workplace (if applicable)
 - F. Names and ages of siblings
 - G. Description of the suspected child abuse or neglect (or the threat of child abuse or neglect), statements made by the child, statements the child allegedly made to others, observations of the child that may indicate child abuse or neglect, past interactions with the parents or other caretakers that might be indicative of child abuse or neglect
4. The mandated reporter will then notify the building principals the same day of the child's name and suspected abuse, if the principal was not part of the original phone call.
5. State law provides a variety of protections to people who make reports of suspected abuse or neglect in good faith. All reports of suspected abuse or neglect are confidential. Anyone who, in good faith, reports suspected abuse or neglect is immune from both criminal and civil liability. No person may be discharged, discipline, or otherwise discriminated against in regard to employment. (48.9981(2).
6. Someone who is legally required to report suspected abuse or neglect and intentionally does not do so may be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than 6 months or both (Wis. Stat 48.981(6)
7. Once the report is made, the teacher is not responsible for anything further.
8. After the reported incident, if additional information is known about suspected child abuse or neglect, the staff member is required to report this again.