

Children have a right, to be safe, secure and adequately cared for at home, at school and in the community. The school has a responsibility to safeguard children from abuse and neglect. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the school shall cooperate with Alberta Children's Services, the police and/or medical services.

Definitions

Child in need of intervention services is a term found in the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act. A child is in need of intervention services if there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the survival, security or development of the child is endangered because of any of the following:

- The child has been abandoned or lost.
- The parent/guardian of the child is dead, and the child has no other parent.
- The child is neglected by the parent /guardian.
- The child has been or there is substantial risk that the child will be physically injured or sexually abused by the parent/guardian of the child.
- The parent/guardian of the child is unable or unwilling to protect the child from physical injury or sexual abuse.
- The child has been emotionally injured by the parent.
- The parent/guardian of the child is unable or unwilling to protect the child from emotional injury.
- The parent/guardian of the child has subjected the child to or is unable or unwilling to protect the child from cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

Emotional abuse is the impairment of a child's mental or emotional functioning or development and there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the emotional injury is the result of:

- Rejection;
- Deprivation of affection and/or cognitive stimulation.
- Exposure of domestic violence or severe domestic disharmony.
- Inappropriate criticism, threats, humiliation, accusations or expectations.
- The mental or emotional condition of the parent/guardian of the child or of anyone living in the same residence as the child.
- Chronic alcohol or drug abuse by anyone living in the child's home.

Neglect is if the parent/guardian is unable or unwilling to:

- Provide the child with the necessities of life;
- Obtain for the child, or permit the child to receive essential medical, surgical or other remedial treatment that is necessary for the health or well-being of the child; or
- Provide the child with adequate care or supervision.

Physical abuse is an intentional, substantial and observable injury to a child as a result of the non-accidental application of force or an agent to the child's body.

Sexual abuse is inappropriate exposure or subjection to sexual contact, activity or behavior, including prostitution-related activities. Exposing children to pornography or luring children through the Internet are forms of sexual abuse.

Procedures

1. The Principal shall ensure that the school staff is familiar with the contents of the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and their responsibilities under the Act to report all suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. A copy of the Act can be accessed on the government web site at: http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/display_acts.cfm
 - 1.1 The Principal shall provide staff members with the necessary information to enable them to recognize signs of child abuse or neglect.
2. Division employees are legally required to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect directly to the appropriate authorities in accordance with the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act.
 - 2.1 The Child Abuse Hotline may be contacted anytime at 1-800-387-KIDS (5437).
3. The safety and welfare of the students are of paramount concern in addressing cases of suspected child abuse. Reports of suspected abuse shall remain confidential on the basis of those who need to know in order to protect the safety and welfare of the child.
4. Any staff member who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, will immediately report to a caseworker for Child and Family Services Authority and the Principal. In the event that the Principal is suspected, the report shall be made to the caseworker for Child and Family Services Authority and the Superintendent.
5. A report to the local Child and Family Services Authority shall include
 - 5.1 The staff member's name and school telephone number;
 - 5.2 The staff member's relationship to the child;
 - 5.3 Any immediate concerns about the child's safety;
 - 5.4 The location of the child;
 - 5.5 The child's name, age and address;
 - 5.6 Information on the disclosure such as when and where the alleged abuse took place, how long the alleged abuse has been occurring, current location of the alleged abuser or parents/guardians;
 - 5.7 The child's condition and any concerns about the child's immediate safety;
 - 5.8 Any other relevant information concerning the child and/or family.
6. Notes, reports or written documentation on student disclosure of abuse or violence are to be kept separate from the student's record or any other record accessible to school staff. All notes, reports or documentation made regarding the disclosed abuse or violence must be made available when request by police or caseworkers.

7. The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act prescribes penalties for those who fail to report such situations and provides protection against a person making a report unless the reporting “is done maliciously or without reasonable and probable grounds for the belief”.
8. Case workers and police may have access to students in certain circumstances when the students are alleged victims of abuse or neglect. In such special circumstances, assessors are expected to consider the convenience of school and student when seeking times for access.
 - 8.1 Case workers may advise that, in the interests of confidentiality and full and undistorted disclosure, it is appropriate for assessors and students to meet alone.
 - 8.2 If a student requests that a staff member be present, the Principal shall comply with the request.
9. The Principal shall cooperate with a request by Child and Family Services Authority or police to interview a student on school premises. If a student interview is requested, the Principal shall request formal identification of the person making the request to verify the person is in a position of authority.
10. It is the responsibility of the investigator to notify the parents/guardians. Interviews conducted on school premises must be conducted in ways that minimize any distraction for the student, other students or staff and the proceedings of the school.
 - 10.1 The Principal shall clarify with the assessor when contact will be made with the parent.
 - 10.2 The Principal shall provide the name of the assessor to the parent in those cases where students are in the care of the investigator.
11. If the investigator has not yet contacted the parent/guardian and they call the Principal indicating that the child has not yet returned home, the Principal will refer the parent/guardian to the investigator.
12. If threats are made against school personnel or the student, the Principal shall contact the police.
13. The principal shall follow-up on the case by contacting representatives of Alberta Children's Services to obtain relevant information on the disposition of the reported incident.

Reference: Section 11, 33, 52, 53, 56, 196, 197, 222 Education Act
Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Practice Review of Teachers and Teacher Leaders Regulation 9/2019
Student Record Regulation 97/2019
Responding to Child Abuse – A Handbook
Grande Prairie Public School Division AP 325
Holy Family Catholic Separate School Division AP 325

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