

CHILD ABUSE – REPORTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Policy Code: **4240/7312**

The board of education supports all employees who in good faith make a report of suspected child abuse, neglect, dependency, or death as a result of maltreatment.

Any school employee who knows or has cause to suspect child abuse, neglect, dependency, or death as a result of maltreatment is legally required to report the case of the child to the director of social services or other designated official within the Haywood County Health and Human Services Agency. The employee also shall immediately report the case to the principal.

Any doubt about reporting a suspected situation must be resolved in favor of reporting, and the report must be made immediately. A school employee is immune by statute from any civil and/or criminal liability when reporting in good faith suspected child abuse, neglect, dependency, or death as a result of maltreatment. Failure on the part of any school employee to report may result in disciplinary action being brought against the employee by the school system or civil action under the law.

The principal may establish a contact person in the school to act as a liaison with social services. All employees shall cooperate fully with social services in its investigation of suspected child abuse, neglect, dependency, or death as a result of maltreatment. Employees shall permit the child to be interviewed by social services on school campuses during school hours and shall provide social services with confidential information, so long as the disclosure does not violate state or federal law. Any confidential information disclosed by social services to employees will remain confidential and will only be redisclosed for purposes directly connected with carrying out the responsibilities of the school system or the employee.

Upon request and to the extent permitted by law, school system officials shall share with other agencies designated in G.S. 7B-3100(a) information that is relevant to (1) any assessment of a report of child abuse, neglect, dependency, or death as a result of maltreatment by social services; (2) the provision or arrangement of protective services in a child abuse, neglect, or dependency case by social services; or (3) any case in which a petition is filed alleging that a juvenile is abused, neglected, dependent, undisciplined, or delinquent. School system officials and the designated agencies must continue to share such information until the protective services case is closed by social services or, if a petition is filed, until the juvenile is no longer subject to the jurisdiction of juvenile court.

The superintendent shall develop any necessary procedures for reporting suspected child abuse, neglect, dependency, or death as a result of maltreatment, for sharing information with designated agencies, and for cooperating with investigations by social services. The board encourages school officials to provide staff development opportunities related to identifying and reporting child abuse, neglect, dependency, or death as a result of maltreatment.

In addition to the requirements of this policy, any administrator who knows or has reason to believe that a licensed employee has engaged in conduct which involves physical or sexual abuse

of a child shall report that information to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in accordance with subsection C.4 of policy 4040/7310, Staff-Student Relations.

Legal References: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; G.S. 7B-101, -301, -302, -309, -3100; 8-53.4; 14-318.2; 115C-400, -402; 16 N.C.A.C. 6C.0312; State Board of Education Policy LICN-007, NCAC-6C.0312

Cross References: Professional and Staff Development (policy 1610/7800), Staff-Student Relations (policy 4040/7310), Student Records (policy 4700)

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