

Policy

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Code JG Issued 3/16/22

Any principal, assistant principal, school teacher, nurse, counselor, childcare worker, computer technician, mental health professional, or social worker, who has received information in his/her professional capacity which gives him/her reason to believe that the physical or mental health or welfare of a child under the age of 18, or a student eligible for exceptional education services up to age 21, has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must report such a situation. Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect may be made by telephone or otherwise reported to the Department of Social Services or to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides or is found.

Other school employees who have reason to believe that a child under the age of 18, or a student eligible for exceptional services up to age 21, has been subjected to, or who may be subjected to, physical abuse or neglect, must also report as stated above.

The State of South Carolina provides both civil and criminal immunity to those reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. Anyone required to report who knowingly fails to do so may be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Reporting Procedures

School personnel who suspect child abuse or neglect must make a report in good faith. It is not the responsibility of school personnel to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, or to make a determination of whether the child is in need of protection.

The teacher or other school employee first suspecting the abuse must make an oral report to law enforcement agency or to the Department of Social Services by telephoning or otherwise. When the reporter believes the suspected abuse or neglect was committed by a person other than the parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, the report must be made to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Reports must include the following:

- name, address, and age of student
- name and address of parent/guardian or caretaker
- nature and extent of injuries or description of neglect
- any other information that might help to establish the cause of the injuries or condition

The person making the report must inform the principal of the school of any oral or written report submitted in a case of suspected child abuse or neglect.

School employees who make reports of suspected child abuse and neglect must maintain the confidentiality of the information contained in the report. Employees will release this

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information only to the Department of Social Services and/or the county law enforcement agency.

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Legal References:

- A. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:
 - 1. Section 63-1-10, et seq. - South Carolina Children's Code.
 - 2. Section 63-7-20 - Definitions.
 - 3. Section 63-7-310 through 350 - Persons required to report.