

UTAH COUNTY ACADEMY OF SCIENCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: E – Records and Recording
POLICY TITLE: Child Abuse and Reporting
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1. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

Child abuse and neglect are not normally single events but usually involve repeated events affecting the same child, growing more severe the longer the problem continues. The damage, both physical and psychological, is cumulative. The longer the offender's behavior continues unchecked, the greater the chance of serious and permanent disability to the child. School administrators, teachers, and other school employees have an important role to play in the elimination of child abuse because they are in a unique position to observe children over extended periods on a daily basis. This reporting policy should help administrators, teachers, and other school employees in understanding and fulfilling their legal responsibilities regarding child abuse.

2. REQUIRED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

- 2.1. Utah law requires that whenever any person, including any school employee, has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to incest, molestation, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect, or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in such, he/she must make a report to the nearest peace officer, law enforcement agency, or office of the Division of Child and Family Services. All school personnel shall comply with the legal requirements as outlined in this policy.
- 2.2. It is not the responsibility of school administrators, teachers, or other school district employees to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, or to determine whether the child is in need of protection. Investigations are the responsibility of the Division of Child and Family Services. Investigation by school personnel prior to submitting a report shall not go beyond that necessary to support a reasonable belief that a reportable problem exists. School personnel shall refrain from interviewing or having contact with the suspected abuser.
- 2.3. School personnel shall cooperate with social service and law enforcement agency employees authorized to investigate reports of alleged child abuse and neglect, assisting as asked as members of interdisciplinary child protection teams in providing protective diagnostic, assessment, treatment, and coordination services.
- 2.4. Persons making reports or participating in good faith in an investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect are immune from any civil or criminal liability that otherwise might arise from those actions. (Utah Code Ann. §80-2-602)

- 2.5.** School administrators, teachers, Division of Child and Family Services, and law enforcement personnel are required to preserve the anonymity of those making the initial report and any others involved in the subsequent investigation.
- 2.6.** The School Principal, or his/her designee, shall distribute annually to all school employees copies of the school's procedures for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.
- 2.7.** To determine whether or not there is reason to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred, professional school employees may (but are not required to) gather information only to the extent necessary to determine whether a reportable circumstance exists.
- 2.8.** Interviews with the suspected abuser shall not be conducted by school administrators or other school employees. Notes of voluntary or spontaneous statements by the child shall be made and given to the investigating agency. Interviews conducted by anyone other than the investigating agency could jeopardize proper handling of a child abuse or neglect case.
- 2.9.** School administrators or other school employees shall not contact the parents, relatives, friends, neighbors, etc. for the purpose of determining the cause of the injury and/or apparent neglect.
- 2.10.** If there is reason to believe that a child may have been subjected to abuse or neglect, a verbal report of the abuse or neglect shall be made immediately by the school employee to:
- 2.10.1.** the school principal, or his/her designee; then to
- 2.10.2.** the appropriate legal authorities. The teacher or other school employee is responsible to personally report the abuse or neglect to the proper legal authorities. The school principal should not report the abuse or neglect for the teacher or other school employee, although the principal may be present when the report is made. When making the verbal report, always have the person receiving the report identify himself/herself.
- 2.11.** The school employee will complete a written statement within forty- eight (48) hours. This record will be considered a controlled record as defined in UCAS Policy EE. One copy shall be placed in a separate file to be maintained by the school principal for all reported cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. The written statement shall not be placed in the child's educational file.

3. HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

UCAS shall provide, every other year, training and instruction on child sexual abuse and human trafficking prevention and awareness to school personnel, parents, guardians and students and shall provide evidence of compliance with this section. This training will include information regarding identifying children who are victims or may be at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation. UCAS may determine the mode of delivery for the training and instruction and will use instructional materials approved by the Utah State Board of Education shall be used to provide training and instruction to school personnel and parents or guardians and students.

REFERENCES

UTAH CODE ANN. § 80-2-602

FORMS

Form A – Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Form
Form B – School Liability Release Form

HISTORY

Revised – February 21, 2023. Addition of Section 3.
Approved – January 20, 2015.
Revised – October 2013.
