



Background

Children have a legal right to adequate care and to be safe and secure. While parents have primary responsibility to ensure the welfare of their children, the school and its employees have a particular responsibility beyond that of the general public. Therefore, it is the obligation of all school personnel to be guided by the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act with respect to child abuse and to report any suspected cases to Region 3 Calgary and Area Child and Family Services and/or the police.

Procedures

1. Legal Duty to Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse

- 1.1 Anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been, or there is substantial risk that s/he will be abused or neglected by a parent/guardian, has a legal duty under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act to promptly report the matter to a caseworker with Region 3 Calgary and Area Child and Family Services.
- 1.2 It is not up to an individual to determine if the disclosure or indicators of abuse are sufficient evidence for an investigation. That decision is made by the caseworker in consultation with his/her supervisor.
- 1.3 The obligation to report is not discharged until the individual who has observed the indicators of abuse has reported directly to a caseworker.

2. Deciding to Report – Responding to a Disclosure

- 2.1 A disclosure made by a child to an individual must be recorded by that individual in the child's own words.
 - 2.1.1 The record is to include observed facts such as the child's behaviour, any physical marks, actions, comments, and the persons present at the time of the incident.
 - 2.1.2 No further interviewing is to occur and the child's parent/guardians are not to be contacted.
- 2.2 The individual is encouraged to consult with the Principal prior to making a report to Child and Family Services.
- 2.3 The Principal, or any other person, cannot prohibit an individual from making a report.

3. Making A Report

- 3.1 Reports are to be made to a caseworker at Region 3 Calgary and Area Child and Family Services. If unable to reach the office, the staff member shall call the Child Abuse Hotline.

Calgary Children's Services – South 403-297-6240
Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-387-5437 or 1-403-297-2995

4. Confidentiality/Record Keeping

- 4.1 All personnel are expected to respect the child's and family's rights to privacy throughout the reporting and investigation procedures.
- 4.2 Notes, reports or written observations regarding alleged abuse or neglect are to be kept separate from the student's school record and any other record accessible to other staff.
- 4.3 Any record made regarding alleged or reported abuse is to be kept secure and disclosed only to police or a caseworker during the investigation process.

5. Child, Youth and Family Enhancement interviewing on School Property

- 5.1 The caseworker may, during the course of an investigation, request permission from the Principal to interview the child on school premises. School personnel are expected to cooperate with the request.
- 5.2 The caseworker will ask, in the presence of a school staff member, if the child wishes a staff member to be present during the interview. Unless agreed to by the child and the caseworker, school personnel are not to participate in the interview.
- 5.3 Prior to leaving the school, the caseworker is to notify the Principal or designate of the plan for the child. The caseworker will notify the parents/guardian of the interview. Any caseworker calling the school shall provide his/her credentials. A copy of this information and a record of the call shall be kept at the school.

6. Follow-up Communication between Calgary Children's Services South and school personnel.

- 6.1 Calgary Children's Services South is to ensure the Principal or designate will be given any necessary information needed to provide education services to children involved in their services.

Reference:

Education Act, s. 11, 27, 52, 53, 54, 196, 197, 222
Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Practice Review of Teachers Regulation 4/99
Student Record Regulation 225/2006
Responding to Child Abuse – A Handbook (October 2005)