

REPORTING SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

PREAMBLE

The Board recognizes that Burnaby School District employees play a unique and important role in the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect. The Board recognizes its responsibilities in the prevention of child abuse and neglect and in the reporting of suspected cases of abuse and neglect to the appropriate authority/authorities.

POLICY

THE BOARD SHALL ENSURE ALL SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES ARE AWARE OF THE DUTY TO REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND BURNABY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S REPORTING PROTOCOLS. THE BOARD SHALL ALSO FACILITATE AND SUPPORT ANY INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE THAT SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT ARE INVESTIGATED IN THE LEAST INTRUSIVE AND MOST RESPECTFUL WAY POSSIBLE FOR THE CHILD.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To raise awareness in all Burnaby School District employees regarding child abuse and neglect so as to protect children who are at risk of being abused or neglected.
2. To ensure all Burnaby School District employees are aware of their duty to report.
3. To ensure that there is a collaborative working relationship with Burnaby RCMP and MCFD in regards to preventing child abuse and neglect in the school and community.

For the purposes of the following administrative procedures, child abuse includes but is not limited to any intentional or non-intentional act of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect. For a full description of terms, including definitions of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect, please refer to The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers (2002).

A child refers to anyone who is under the age of 19.

Date Adopted: 1987 10
Date(s) Revised: 2000 05 23
2012 12 11

Cross References:

Statutory: C.F.C.S. Sec. 14
Other:

REGULATIONS & PROCEDURES

POLICY # 5.20

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A. Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse or Neglect by a Burnaby School District Employee, Volunteer or Contracted Service Provider

Responsibilities of the School District Employee:

Where a Burnaby School District employee has reason to believe a child has been abused by another School District employee, volunteer or contracted service provider, the employee shall:

1. Call 911 if the student is in immediate danger.
 - If the reporting employee believes that the student is in immediate danger, the employee will call 911. Immediate danger means that an emergency is occurring and the reporting employee is currently witnessing harm.
2. Provide a verbal report to the Superintendent of Schools or School Administrator.
 - Any employee who suspects a school district employee, volunteer or contracted service provider of child abuse must immediately contact the superintendent of schools and/or their school administrator and provide full details of the allegation in a private and confidential manner.
3. Not inform the family of the student of the report.
 - The reporting employee shall not inform the family of the student of the report. The Superintendent of Schools or Designate in coordination with the RCMP will decide on who is to contact the family of the student.

Teachers who report other teachers suspected of child abuse do not contravene the British Columbia Teachers Federation Code of Ethics.

Responsibility of School Administrator:

Upon receiving a report of suspected child abuse by another School District employee, volunteer or Contracted service provider, the School Administrator shall:

1. Contact the Superintendent of Schools.

Responsibilities of the Superintendent of Schools or Designate:

Upon receiving a report of suspected child abuse by another School District employee, volunteer or contracted service provider, the Superintendent of Schools shall:

1. Contact the Burnaby RCMP.
 - Contact the Child Abuse and Sexual Offence Unit of the Burnaby RCMP to inform them of the allegation.
2. Coordinate contact of the student's parent(s) with the Burnaby RCMP.
3. Report the allegation to Ministry of Children and Family Development team in the community where the employee, volunteer or contracted service provider resides.
 - While the Burnaby School District and/or the Burnaby RCMP will investigate the suspected abuse of the student by the school district employee, volunteer or contracted service provider, the MCFD office where the person who is suspected of child abuse resides should also be notified so that they can determine if there are other protection concerns. The RCMP file number should be communicated to MCFD.
 - Public inquiries about the child protection and/or police investigations should be referred to the appropriate authorities.
4. Assemble a team of district personnel to investigate the alleged abuse by the school district employee, volunteer or contracted service provider. The personnel on this team may include: The Superintendent, the Associate Superintendent, an Assistant Superintendent, the Director of Human Resources, the Manager of Youth Services, and the Coordinator – Student Safety and Child Abuse Prevention.
5. Provide a general notification to the Board of Education that an investigation is being undertaken without providing details such as the name of the employee under investigation.
6. Facilitate the activities of the district's investigating team and the police in carrying out their respective roles, mandates and responsibilities within the school setting. In situations where the RCMP initiates a criminal investigation, a school district investigation shall be conducted only after significant consultation and collaboration with the RCMP. Please refer to the Interagency Agreement – Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect for more detailed information. Significant consultation and collaboration with the RCMP will not occur until after the employee is notified that an employment investigation will occur.
7. Ensure that the results of the district team's investigation are fully documented.
8. Support the development of follow-up plans with other professionals to support the alleged victim and others, both children and employees, who may be affected by the disclosure or investigation (e.g. critical incident debriefing, counseling, referrals, safety plan, etc.).
9. If the welfare of any student(s) might be threatened by the presence of the employee during the RCMP or District investigation, the Superintendent of Schools may suspend the employee pursuant

to section 15(5) of the School Act. If warranted at the conclusion of the employment investigation, disciplinary action may be recommended against the employee, including termination of services to the Board of Education. In circumstances involving volunteers or contract services providers, the Superintendent of Schools may consider termination of services.

10. Upon completion of the employment investigation, the Superintendent of Schools will report the matter to the Board of Education. If there is any disciplinary action taken by the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools will subsequently report the matter to Schools Protection Program, Risk Management Branch, and if the employee is a teacher, to the Teacher Regulation Branch.

B. Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse or Neglect by a Family or Community Member

Responsibilities of the School District Employee:

Where a School District employee has reason to believe (either a child has disclosed or a staff member suspects) a child has been abused and/or neglected by a parent/guardian or other community member and the parent(s) are unable to protect, the employee shall:

1. Call 911 if the student is in immediate danger
 - If the reporting employee believes that the student is in immediate danger, the employee will also call 911. Immediate danger means that an emergency is occurring and the reporting employee is currently witnessing harm.
2. Make a Report to a Ministry of Children & Family Development Child Protection Worker

All reports of suspected child abuse in Burnaby are made to a child protection worker at a Burnaby Ministry of Children & Family Development office

- For children under 12 South Office 604-660-9494 or North Office 604-660-0602.
- For youth 12 and over 604-660-5900.
- For Aboriginal students 604-660-9544.
- After-hours 604-660-8180 or the Children's Helpline 310-1234

If the report is being made because of a student's disclosure, the staff member receiving the disclosure shall make the report to MCFD immediately.

Whenever possible, when making the report, the reporting person should have available the child's name, address, and birth date, parent(s) names, sibling(s) names, indicate if the child is Aboriginal or if an interpreter will be needed.

The child protection worker will also ask for as much of the following information as is available:

- The child's location
- Whether there are any immediate concerns about the child's safety
- Why you believe the child is at risk
- Any statements or disclosures made by the child
- Information about the family, parents and alleged offender
- Information about siblings or other children who may be at risk
- Whether you know of any previous incidents involving, or concerns about the child
- Information about other persons or agencies closely involved with the child and/or family
- Information about other persons who may be witnesses or may have information about the child
- Information about the nature of the child's disabilities, his or her mode of communication, and the name of a key support person, and

- Any other relevant information concerning the child and/or family such as language or culture.

Do not contact the parents of the child. This is the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

MCFD may involve the RCMP in a joint investigation.

3. Provide a verbal report to the School Administrator

The employee may immediately inform the School Administrator that a report has been made to the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Employees who report to supervisors who are not school administrators may also inform their supervisor that a report has been made.

4. Document reports made on the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Form

It is important to fully document any reports made using the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Form. The employee should keep a copy of the form for their records and forward the original in a sealed envelope to the Coordinator – Student Safety and Child Abuse Prevention at the District Administration Office. Forms will be kept in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act.

Responsibilities of the School Administrator or Employee Supervisor:

Upon receiving a report of suspected child abuse or disclosure, the school administrator shall:

1. Support the reporting employee in their duty to report.
2. Support the MCFD or RCMP investigation team.

School administrators shall allow the investigating child protection worker and/or the police to interview the child in the school. As the school is a safe, neutral environment in which to conduct interviews, child protection workers or police officers may choose the school as an interview site. The school administrator *may* discuss the need for school district representative presence during the interview with the child protection worker or police officer. *However*, the presence of a school district representative during the interview is not mandatory. It is expected that the administrator shall afford the investigating child protection worker or police officer all pertinent information.

3. Follow-up from the Child Protection Worker

Section 16 of the Child, Families and Community Services Act requires the Ministry of Children and Family Development to make reasonable efforts to report results of the child protection investigation to the reporter. The employee who made the abuse report or the school administrator originally informed of the allegation by the employee may follow up the matter with the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

4. Support the Child

If the student's ability to function at school is affected by the investigation or the results of the investigation, the school administrator may, in consultation with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, arrange for appropriate support or assistance to be provided to the student.

Responsibilities of the Safe Schools Department:

1. Provide district-wide training on reporting and responding to child abuse and neglect on an annual basis.
2. Consult as needed with administrators and other school district employees regarding their duty to report specific incidents.
3. Debrief specific incidents with school district staff as needed and requested.
4. Ensure Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Forms are complete and kept in a confidential manner. Dispose of the forms seven (7) years after the child reaches the age of majority.
5. Ongoing liaison with MCFD, RCMP and TRB to ensure best practices and protocols are being followed.

Date Adopted: 1987 10
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Cross References:
Statutory: C.F.C.S. Sec. 14
Other