

MONONA GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Policy 454

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

The Board recognizes that the community views the school as being a valuable social resource and is considered by many to be second only to the family in its potential for ongoing and thorough involvement in the lives of children and youth. School personnel are seen as being in a key position to identify children suspected or known to be abused and/or neglected. As required by state law, school personnel shall report any suspected incident to the appropriate agency (see below). In this regard, both prevention and intervention services shall be provided by the district in an effort to better ensure the health, welfare and/or safety of students.

Prevention

It is the Board's belief that children should be empowered with the adaptive skills necessary to prevent and halt abusive and neglectful situations. Educators spend more time with children than any other professional group in society. Schools, through a coordinated, well-developed curriculum program, can most effectively ensure that appropriate information is provided to a large number of children of all ages.

A protective behaviors curriculum that begins with kindergarten children and goes through high school must be particularly sensitive to the specific developmental needs of each age group with which it deals. In developing a program to address the problem of child abuse and neglect in society, the Board recognizes that the sensitive nature of the topic calls for a cooperative effort between parents/guardians, schools and community agencies.

The implementation of a protective behaviors program is directed at increasing awareness and prevention skills of all students. While parents/guardians and society have primary responsibility for childcare, children also need to have information about the world around them in order to help care for themselves.

In order for educators and the district to effectively implement a protective behaviors curriculum, school personnel must be knowledgeable and comfortable about the subject. Inservicing shall be provided by the district on an on-going basis.

The district's protective behaviors program shall be under the direction of the pupil services department.

Intervention

Any social worker, teacher, nurse, psychologist, administrator or counselor, physical therapist, occupational therapist or speech therapist having reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen in the course of professional duties has been abused or neglected or having reason to believe that a child seen in the course of professional duties has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that

abuse or neglect of the child will occur, shall immediately report said incidents to the Dane County Department of Social Services or sheriff or police department and inform it of the facts and circumstances. School personnel shall not contact the child's family or any other person to determine the cause of any suspected abuse and/or neglect. If the reporter has reason to suspect that the child is in immediate physical danger, the reporter may request an immediate investigation by the sheriff or police department.

Any person participating in good faith in the making of a report shall have immunity from liability, civil or criminal, that result by reason of the action. For the purpose of any proceeding, civil or criminal, the good faith of any person reporting shall be presumed. In addition, no person making a referral may be discharged from employment for so doing.

The Board recognizes that, while there is protection from liability for making good faith reports of suspected abuse and/or neglect, whoever willfully violates state law by failure to report as required, may be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than six months or both.

The district shall maintain as confidential any and all information pertaining to the suspected child abuse or neglect report and to share that information only with those individuals provided for under state law. Staff members who divulge such information to an unauthorized person or persons are subject to disciplinary action by the district and may be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than six months or both.

The district shall conduct review sessions for all district employees required to make a child abuse/neglect report regarding this policy on a yearly basis.

Referral information shall not become part of the student's records. All referrals shall be confidential, except as otherwise provided by state law.

LEGAL REFERENCES: Sections 48.981 Wisconsin Statutes
 118.01(2)(d)8
 940.225
 940.227
 944.30
 948.02
 948.025
 948.05
 948.055
 948.10

CROSS REFERENCE: Administrative Rule 454, Child Abuse/Neglect Definitions
BOARD APPROVAL: May 14, 2003