

5021

Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect

Nebraska State Law and school policy mandates school officials to make a report to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protective Services) when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected, or a child is in a situation which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect. According to Nebraska State Law, abuse or neglect means knowingly, intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child to be (Legal Reference: Nebraska Statute 28-710):

- a. Placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health;
- b. Cruelly confined or cruelly punished;
- c. Deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care;
- d. Left unattended in a motor vehicle if such minor child is six years of age or younger;
- e. Sexually abused; or
- f. Sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging, or forcing such person to solicit or engage in prostitution, debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography, films, or depictions.

Any school employee who suspects that a child has been abused or neglected shall immediately report the suspicion to their building principal or administrator and if that person is not available, the school counselor. However, informing a building principal, administrator, or school counselor does not end the school employee's responsibility; all school employees shall report to the appropriate law enforcement agency or the Department of Health and Human Services any instance where they have reasonable cause to believe or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.

Reports are to be made accurately and as soon as possible. To assure accuracy, reporting staff are to document the date of the incident and specific statements or explanations made by a child regarding an abuse/neglect concern. Timeliness in making a report will assist in minimizing further risk to the child by allowing law enforcement or Child Protective Service workers to interview the child during the school day and prior to an evening or weekend. In cases of physical injury or the safety and the well being of the child is in jeopardy, the city police department or county sheriff's office shall be contacted immediately. Building principals, administration, or school counselors may assist in making any appropriate contacts with law enforcement agencies.

Central City Public Schools staff shall not investigate, make judgments or conclusions about whether or not abuse or neglect as occurred and will defer that determination to appropriate law enforcement agencies. In investigations of child abuse or neglect, the decision to inform parents or guardians lies in the hands of the investigating authorities. Nebraska statutes give legal immunity from any civil or criminal liability to any person who makes a good faith report of child abuse or neglect or participates in a judicial proceeding resulting from such a report.

Adopted on: **December 20, 2010**

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