

PIEDMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Policy

Students

BP 5141.4

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING PROCEDURES

The Board of Education recognizes that the district has a responsibility to facilitate the prompt reporting of incidents of child abuse and neglect. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that parents/guardians have access to procedures whereby they can report suspected child abuse at a school site to appropriate child protective agencies.

(cf. 1312.1 - Complaints Concerning District Employees)
(cf. 5141.41 - Child Abuse Prevention)

The Superintendent or designee shall establish regulations for use by employees in identifying and reporting child abuse.

District employees shall report known or suspected incidences of child abuse in accordance with district regulations and state law. Employees shall fully cooperate with the child protective agencies responsible for reporting, investigating and prosecuting cases of child abuse.

(cf. 4112.9/4212.9/4312.9 - Employee Notifications)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

33308.1 Guidelines on procedure for filing child abuse complaints

44690-44691 Staff development in the detection of child abuse and neglect

48906 Notification when student released to peace officer

PENAL CODE

273a Willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of child; endangering life or health

11164-11174.3 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, especially:

11165-11165.15 Definitions relating to child abuse

11166-11170 Reporting known or suspected cases of child abuse

11172 Immunity from liability

11174.3 Interviewing victim at school

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

600-601.2 Referral to school attendance review board; minors habitually disobedient or truant

15630-15637 Dependent adult abuse reporting

STATUTES OTHER THAN CODE

Chapter 1102, Statutes of 1991, Section 6

Management Resources:

CDE LEGAL ADVISORIES

0514.93 Guidelines for parents to report suspected child abuse by school district employees or other persons against a pupil at school site

Adopted: July 5, 2000

PIEDMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Administrative Regulation

Students

AR 5141.4

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING PROCEDUES

Duty to Report

Certificated employees and classified employees shall report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to a child protective agency by telephone immediately or as soon as practically possible and in writing within 36 hours. The reporting duties are individual and cannot be delegated to another individual except under circumstances set forth in Penal Code 11166.

Definitions

1. Child Abuse or neglect includes the following:

- a. A physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person
- b. Sexual abuse of a child, including sexual assault or sexual exploitation, as defined in Penal Code 11165.1
- c. Willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child, or willfully inflicting unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering, or failure to safeguard a child from these injuries when the child is under a person's care or custody (Penal Code 11165.3)
- d. Unlawful corporal punishment or injury resulting in a traumatic condition (Penal Code 11165.4)
- e. The negligent treatment or the maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances indicating harm or threatened harm to the child's health or welfare. The term includes both acts and omissions on the part of the responsible person. (Penal Code 11165.2)
- f. Neglect of a child or abuse in out-of-home care (Penal Code 11165.5)

2. Child abuse or neglect does not include:

- a. A mutual affray between minors (Penal Code 11165.6)
- b. An injury caused by reasonable and necessary force used by a peace officer acting within the course and scope of his/her employment (Penal Code 11165.6)
- c. An injury resulting from the exercise by a teacher, vice principal, principal, or other certificated employee of the same degree of physical control over a student that a

parent/guardian would be privileged to exercise, not exceeding the amount of physical control reasonably necessary to maintain order, protect property, protect the health and safety of students, or maintain proper and appropriate conditions conducive to learning (Education Code 44807)

d. An injury caused by a school employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to persons or damage to property, to protect himself/herself, or to obtain weapons or other dangerous objects within the control of the student (Education Code 49001)

e. Physical pain or discomfort caused by athletic competition or other such recreational activity voluntarily engaged in by the student (Education Code 49001)

f. Homelessness or classification as an unaccompanied minor (Penal Code 11165.15)

3. "Mandated Reporters" are those people defined by law as "child care custodians," "health practitioners," "child visitation monitors" and "employees of a child protective agency." Mandated reporters include virtually all school employees. The following school personnel are required to report:

All certificated staff, administrators, school psychologists, nurses, counselors, classified employees trained in child abuse reporting.

4. "Child Protective Agencies" are those law enforcement and child protective services responsible for investigating child abuse reports, including the local police or sheriff department, county welfare or juvenile probation department and child protective services.

5. "Reasonable Suspicion" means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain such a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing when appropriate on his/her training and experience, to suspect child abuse. (Penal Code 11166)

Reporting Procedures

1. To report known or suspected child abuse, any employee (as defined above) shall report by telephone to the local child protective agency.
Piedmont Police Department (510) 420-3000

The telephone report must be made immediately, or as soon as practically possible, upon suspicion. This report will include:

- a. The name of the person making the report
- b. The name of the child
- c. The present location of the child
- d. The nature and extent of any injury
- e. Any other information requested by the child protective agency, including the information that led the mandated reporter to suspect child abuse

When the verbal report is made, the mandated reporter shall note the name of the official contacted, the date and time contacted, and any instructions or advice received.

2. Within 36 hours of making the telephone report, the mandated reporter shall complete and mail to the local child protective agency a written report which includes a completed Department of Justice form (DOJ SS 8572).

Mandated reporters may obtain copies of the above form either from the district or the local child protective agency. Instructions are included on the form, and reporters may ask the site administrator for help in completing and mailing it; however, the mandated reporter is personally responsible for ensuring that the written report is correctly filed.

Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect shall include, if known: (Penal Code 11167)

- a. The name, business address, and telephone number of the person making the report and the capacity that makes the person a mandated reporter
- b. The child's name and address, present location, and, where applicable, school, grade, and class
- c. The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the child's parents/guardians
- d. The name, address, telephone number, and other relevant personal information about the person who might have abused or neglected the child
- e. The information that gave rise to the reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect and the source(s) of that information

The mandated reporter shall make a report even if some of this information is not known or is uncertain to him/her. (Penal Code 11167)

The mandated reporter may give to an investigator from an agency investigating the case, including a licensing agency, any information relevant to an incident of child abuse or neglect or to a report made for serious emotional damage pursuant to Penal Code 11166.05. (Penal Code 11167)

3. Employees reporting child abuse to a child protective agency are encouraged, but not required, to notify the site administrator or designee as soon as possible after the initial verbal report by telephone. When so notified, the site administrator shall inform the Superintendent or designee.

Administrators so notified shall provide the mandated reporter with any assistance necessary to ensure that reporting procedures are carried out in accordance with law and district regulations. At the mandated reporter's request, the principal may assist in completing and filing these forms.

If the mandated reporter does not disclose his/her identity to a district administrator, he/she shall at least provide or mail a copy of the written report to the district without his/her signature or name.

Training

Within the first six weeks of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall provide training on mandated reporting requirements to district employees and persons working on their behalf who are mandated reporters. Any school personnel hired during the school year shall receive such training within the first six weeks of employment. (Education Code 44691; Penal Code 11165.7)

The Superintendent or designee shall use the online training module provided by the California Department of Social Services. (Education Code 44691)

The training shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, training in identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect. In addition, the training shall include information that failure to report an incident of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect as required by law is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment and/or a fine as specified. (Education Code 44691; Penal Code 11165.7)

The Superintendent or designee shall obtain and retain proof of each mandated reporter's completion of the training. (Education Code 44691)

Legal Responsibility and Liability

1. Mandated reporters have absolute immunity. School employees required to report are not civilly or criminally liable for filing a required or authorized report of known or suspected child abuse.
2. If a mandated reporter fails to report an instance of child abuse which he/she knows to exist or reasonably should know to exist, he/she is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by confinement in jail for up to six months, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both. The mandated reporter may also be held civilly liable for damages resulting from any injury to the child after a failure to report.
3. When two or more persons who are required to report have joint knowledge of a suspected instance of child abuse, and when they so agree, the telephone report may be made by either of them and a single report made and signed by that person. However, if any person knows or should know that the designated person failed to make the report, that person then has a duty to do so.
4. The duty to report child abuse is an individual duty and no supervisor or administrator may impede or inhibit such reporting duties. Furthermore, no person making such a report shall be subject to any sanction.

Victim Interviews

Upon request, a child protective agency representative may interview a suspected victim of child abuse during school hours, on school premises, concerning a report of suspected child abuse that occurred within the child's home. The child shall be given the choice of being interviewed in private or in the presence of any adult school employee or volunteer aide selected by the child. (Penal Code 11174.3)

A staff member or volunteer aide selected by a child may decline to be present at the interview. If the selected person accepts, the principal or designee shall inform him/her, before the interview takes place, of the following legal requirements:

1. The purpose of the selected person's presence at the interview is to lend support to the child and enable him/her to be as comfortable as possible.
2. The selected person shall not participate in the interview.
3. The selected person shall not discuss the facts or circumstances of the case with the child.
4. The selected person is subject to the confidentiality requirements of the Child Abuse and Reporting Act, a violation of which is punishable as specified in Penal Code 11167.5.

If a staff member agrees to be present, the interview shall be held at a time during school hours when it does not involve an expense to the school. (Penal Code 11174.3)

Release of Child to Peace Officer or Child Protective Services Agent

When a child is released to a peace officer or child protective services agent and taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse, the Superintendent or designee and/or principal shall not notify the parent/ guardian as required in other instances of removal of a child from school, but rather shall provide the peace officer or agent with the address and telephone number of the child's parent/guardian. It is the responsibility of the peace officer or agent to notify the parent/guardian of the situation. (Education Code 48906)

Peace officers and child protective services agents will be asked to sign an appropriate release or acceptance of responsibility form.

(cf. 5145.11 - Questioning and Apprehension)

When School Employees are Accused of Child Abuse

Regardless of who child abusers may be, the major responsibilities of mandated reporters are to:

- 1) identify incidents of suspected child abuse, and
- 2) comply with laws requiring the reporting of suspected abuse to the proper authorities. Determining whether or not the suspected abuse actually occurred is not the responsibility of the school employee. Such determination and follow-up investigation will be made by a child protective agency.

Pending the outcome of an investigation by a child protective agency and before formal charges are filed, the employee may be subject to reassignment or a paid leave of absence.

Upon filing formal charges or upon conviction, the district may take disciplinary action in accordance with law, district policies, regulations and/or collective bargaining agreements.

The Superintendent or designee shall seek legal counsel in connection with either the suspension or dismissal of the employee.

(cf. 4117.4 - Dismissal)

(cf. 4118 - Suspension/Disciplinary Action)

(cf. 4218 - Dismissal/Suspension/Disciplinary Action)