

GNA Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and / or Neglect

Statement of Policy

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools' Board of Education directs that all school division employees be vigilant in monitoring the well-being of students in the school division and to address child abuse prevention education training and awareness of staff members regarding child abuse and/or neglect and the duty to report.

All staff members of the school division must report all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect directly to an appropriate authority (Child Protection Services with Ministry of Social Services, First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, police and/or RCMP) in accordance with The Child and Family Services Act. Furthermore, that all school division employees adhere to the current protocol agreement between the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Services and school division Child Abuse Guidelines.

Rationale

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools places the highest priority on ensuring the safety of children. All citizens have a duty to report child abuse and/or neglect in accordance with The Child and Family Services Act and/or The Emergency Protection of Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation Act. This is a shared responsibility by all members of the community and employees of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

Authority

- The Child and Family Services Act
- The Emergency Protection of Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation Act
- Criminal Code of Canada
- Provincial Child Abuse Protocol 2014

Definitions

Physical Abuse: any action, including discipline, causing injury to the child's body.

Emotional Abuse: any action that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes expecting a child to be able to do things that he or she cannot do; embarrassing or insulting a child; and making hurtful comments about a child's appearance, intelligence, size, ability, etc.

Sexual Abuse: any action involving a child in sexual exploitation or sexual activity including touching and/or exposure, such as using a child in the making of/or viewing pornography.

Neglect: failing to provide a child with enough food, proper clothing, shelter, health care, or supervision.

Procedures

1 Duty to Report Abuse or Neglect

- 1.1 The employee of the school division who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child up to the age of 18 is in the need of protection, must immediately report this information directly to the Ministry of Social Services, First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, police and/or RCMP.
- 1.2 The circumstances in which a child may be in need of protection include, but are not limited to, the following examples of abuse or neglect:
 - Physical abuse.
 - Sexual abuse and exploitation.
 - Emotional maltreatment.
 - Exposure to domestic violence or severe domestic disharmony.
 - The child has committed an act that if the child were 12 years of age or more would constitute a criminal offence and family services are necessary to prevent a recurrence.
- 1.3 Abuse includes the following as defined in the Criminal Code of Canada and should be reported:
 - Marriage of children under 16 or removed from Canada for that purpose.
 - Female genital mutilation.
- 1.4 Vulnerable students over 18 years of age:
 - While it is not legally required, abuse or neglect of vulnerable students over 18 may be reported to child protection services and/or police in order to obtain assistance for the young person.
- 1.5 If schools receive reports from parents, community members or bus drivers that they suspect abuse or neglect, we do not report on their behalf. We do need to share that based on The Child and Family Services Act; they have a legal duty to report.

2 Duty to Report Sexual Exploitation

- 2.1 Any employee of the school division who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child up to the age of 18 has been or is likely to be subjected to sexual exploitation shall immediately report this information to a child protection worker and/or police officer.

- 2.2 Child sexual abuse occurs when a child up to the age of 18 has been, or is likely to be, exposed to harmful interaction for a sexual purpose, including involvement in prostitution and/or Criminal Code offenses. See Section 4 of The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act.

3 Reporting

- 3.1 Reasonable grounds to believe:
- Is subjective.
 - Can be based on personal observation or discussion.
 - Does not require proof.
 - Can be based on assumptions or credible second-hand information.
 - Can take into account the training and experience of the person reporting.
 - Can still be reasonable even if it turns out eventually to be untrue.
- 3.2 The employee making the report shall take the following steps:
- The employee shall make the report as soon as possible by telephone or in person to a child protection worker, Ministry of Social Services First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, police and/or RCMP.
 - The employee cannot delegate the reporting to another individual. The employee must make the report.
 - The employee may enlist the support of the principal and/or school counsellor in making the report.
 - The employee must inform the school principal that a report has been made unless the principal is the subject of the report. In such case, the notification that a report has been made shall be provided to the superintendent.
 - The employee must also submit the Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect form to the division. (The Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect form can be found by going to the Resources for Teacher section on OneStop).
 - The duty to report is ongoing. An employee who has additional reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse is required to make a further report, even if the employee has already made a previous report or report related to the same child.
- 3.3 Employees shall not contact the parent/caregivers in situations where the parent/caregiver or the partner of the parent/caregiver is the subject of the report.
- 3.4 Any communication or contact with parents and/or guardians regarding the alleged abuse and/or neglect is the responsibility of the investigating agency.

4 Receiving Disclosures of Abuse from a Child

- 4.1 Regardless of the type of abuse a child reports, all disclosures must be treated in a similar manner. If a child makes a disclosure:
- Listen openly and control your reaction.
 - Reassure the child of their right to safety and that this is not their fault.
 - Do not correct language and let the child report the incident in their own words.
 - Document in writing what the child has reported and your observations.
 - Avoid making promises that cannot be kept (e.g. "I won't tell anyone. I will keep this secret.")

5 Interviews Conducted by Police/Child Protection Services at School

- 5.1 Any request from a child protection worker or police officer to interview a child shall be referred to the principal (or designate).
- 5.2 The principal (or designate) will work with the child protection worker and/or police to make the necessary arrangements for a confidential interview to occur in circumstances where the allegations involve parents/guardians and when having the interview at the school is in the best interest of the child.
- 5.3 The children protection worker and police will determine who will be at the interview and will consider the child's support needs and comfort level. If a school staff member is requested to attend the interview, they should notify their principal and superintendent for guidance.

6 Confidentiality

- 6.1 Employees shall maintain confidentiality of all information. The fact that there is an investigation in progress is confidential.
- 6.2 All information, reports and discussions relative to the child abuse or neglect will be treated as confidential by every employee in the division.
- 6.3 Records are to be stored, accessed and disposed in accordance with board policy.

7 Supporting Documents

- 7.1 The principal is responsible for ensuring that all teachers are teaching child abuse prevention education for all students in PreKindergarten through to Grade 12 through the required outcomes of Kindergarten to Grade 9 health education and extend this learning to other areas of study, where it reasonably applies.
- Curriculum Connections: Opportunities to Address Child Abuse Prevention and Education and Response
 - https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/materials/child-abuseprevention/curriculum-connections__child-abuse-prevention__ENGLISH.pdf
- 7.2 The principal is responsible for reviewing this administrative policy with all employees to ensure that they are aware of and have access to the following documents on our division website:
- Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect Policy.
 - Online Training Module:
 - o English:
http://applications.saskatchewan.ca/learningmodules/DutytoReport2/story_html5.html
 - o French:
http://applications.saskatchewan.ca/learningmodules/DevoirDeSignaler/story_html5.html
 - Ministry of Saskatchewan Document - Investigation of Suspected Child Abuse and or Neglect Fact Sheet for School and School Division Personnel.
 - The Counsel for Children Program and Saskatchewan Schools.

Date Approved

June 12, 2017

Dates Amended:

September 21, 2020

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