

**Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting
Board of Education
Wrightstown Community School District**

The Wrightstown School District Board of Education is concerned with the welfare of all children. It recognizes the legal and ethical obligations to report suspected abuse or neglect and expects district staff to act in accordance with all appropriate Wisconsin statutes.

School personnel who are required to report cases of suspected abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to, teachers, nurses, social workers, psychologists, administrators, counselors, physical therapists, speech/language clinicians, teacher aides, secretaries, coaches and bus drivers. State law protects district employees from being discharged from employment as a direct result of such a report.

School district personnel are expected to report all incidences of suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. In so doing, the Wrightstown School District joins other community agencies in minimizing the negative effects of child abuse or neglect.

Definitions: The following definitions are to assist in defining suspected abuse or neglect:

1. **“Abuse”** means any physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. “Physical injury” includes, but is not limited to, severe bruising, altercations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries or any injury constituting great bodily harm. Abuse also includes sexual intercourse, sexual contact or sexual exploitation.
2. **“Neglect”** means failure, refusal or inability on the part of a parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person exercising temporary or permanent control over a child, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.
3. **“Emotional damage”** means harm to the child’s psychological or intellectual function which is exhibited by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or outward aggressive behavior, or a combination of those behaviors, which is caused by the child’s parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other person exercising temporary or permanent control over the child and for which the child’s parent, guardian or legal custodian has failed to obtain the treatment necessary to remedy the harm. “Emotional damage” may be demonstrated by a substantial and observable change in behavior, emotional response or cognition that is not within the normal range for the child’s age and stage of development.

Penalty for Non-Reporting

School personnel who fail to report suspected abuse or neglect are subject to a fine or imprisonment. Whoever willfully violates the law by failure to report as required may be fined not more than \$1,000.00 or imprisoned not more than six months or both.

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In addition to the penalty prescribed by state law, school district staff could be subjected to legal action by the abused/neglected child's parent or guardian if it is established that the staff member has prior knowledge which, if reported, may have prevented further injury.

Procedures for Reporting:

1. Any school district employee who has reason to suspect that child abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur should immediately report the situation to the school principal and/or counselor. Following this consultation, the district employee (preferred) or the principal should contact, in person or by phone, the County Department of Social Services and inform the agency of the facts and circumstances contributing to the reasons for suspecting child abuse or neglect. Information that will be required includes the student's name, address, age, parent/guardian's name, nature and extent of abuse or neglect and any other information that might assist the Department of Social Services in its investigation. If the Department of Social Services cannot be reached and there is reason to believe that the child's health or safety is in immediate danger, the local police or County Sheriff's Department shall be contacted. The employee should request an immediate investigation by the sheriff or police department.
2. Following the contact with the Department of Social Services, written documentation of the report shall be completed by the principal or the employee, utilizing the proper district reporting methods. All reports and records made under this section shall be confidential (regardless of where they are physically located) and the information can be shared only with legally specified individuals.
3. The Department of Social Services is required to commence an investigation within 24 business hours of receipt of the initial report. School district staff should not pressure the child to gain privileged information regarding any injury or other information surrounding the suspected abuse or neglect. Representatives of the Department of Social Services are expected to follow normal school procedure requiring them to report to the school office prior to interviewing a child. However, school employees cannot deter them from interviewing children on school premises as part of their investigation. The Department of Social Services is required to inform the mandated reporter of the status of the case within 60 days after receipt of the initial report.

References: Wisconsin State Statutes 48.981, 118.31, 940.225, 948.02, 948.025, 948.085, #4430 Law Enforcement and Social Services Questioning of Students; #2230/#5200 Staff Member Code of Conduct

Adopted: 4/23/08

Revised: 4/15/15, 4/17/23