

MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE, ABANDONMENT, NEGLECT AND/OR CHILD IN NEED OF SUPERVISION AND CARE

To comply with Florida law, which makes mandatory the reporting of child abuse, abandonment, and/or child neglect, all school personnel shall comply with the following provisions:

- Any knowledge, or reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is or has been subject to abuse, abandonment, neglect or a child is in need of supervision and care, and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care, shall immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Families toll free hotline number: 1- 800- 96 ABUSE (962-2873).
- Any knowledge, or reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused by an adult other than a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Families toll free hotline number: 1- 800- 96ABUSE (962-2873).
- Any person with knowledge, or suspicion, that a child is the victim of childhood sexual abuse or the victim of a known, or suspected juvenile sexual offender, as defined in chapter 39, F.S., shall report such knowledge or suspicion to *the* Department of Children and Families toll free hotline number – 1-800 -96ABUSE (962-2873).

After the report has been made, reporters may notify the principal or the school based child abuse designee to ensure appropriate support. Principals and child abuse designees shall maintain the confidentiality of the reporter.

School employees who have questions related to child abuse, abandonment, neglect, or a child in need of supervision and care shall consult with the school based child abuse designee.

Any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in any act authorized or required by this chapter, or reporting in good faith any instance of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the department or any law enforcement agency, shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise result by reason of such action. (F.S. 39.203(1))

The following employees must provide their names at the time of making the report: Nurse, health or mental health professional, school teacher, school official and school personnel, social worker, day care center worker, other professional child care worker or law enforcement officer.

Penalties:

Florida Law provides: “A person who is required to report known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, commits a felony of the third degree punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083 or s. 775.084.” *(FS.39.205 (1))*.

In addition, the Department may impose a fine, not to exceed \$10,000 for each violation, upon a person who knowingly and willfully makes a false report of abuse, abandonment, or neglect of a child, or a person who counsels another to make a false report. (FS. **39.206(1)**).

Authority: F.S. 1001.41 (1) (2);

Laws Implemented: F.S. 39.201, 39.203, 39.205(1); 39.206, 39.01

Policy Adopted: 9/5/74; 5/8/78; 11/1/84; 12/7/93; 9/15/98

Policy Amended: 7/24/07, 5/2/00; 9/3/03, 9/19/14