*Policy*

**STUDENT WELFARE**

*Code***JLF***Issued* **DRAFT/19**

The schools of this district will cooperate vigorously to expose the problems of child abuse and neglect.

Any principal, assistant principal, teacher, school attendance officer, computer technician, nurse, or counselor who has received information in his/her professional capacity which gives him/her reason to believe that a child under the age of 18 has been or may be abused or neglected as defined by law must report such a situation. These individuals may call or make the report to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides or is located or to the county Department of Social Services.

Other school staff who have reason to believe that a child under the age of 18 has been or may be abused or neglected as defined by law may also report or cause a report to be made, and are encouraged to do so, as stated above.

The State of South Carolina provides both civil and criminal immunity to those reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. Anyone required to report who knowingly fails to do so may be guilty of a misdemeanor.

# **Reporting Procedures**

School staff who suspect child abuse or neglect must make a report in good faith. It is not the responsibility of school staff to prove that the child has been abused or neglected or to make a determination of whether the child is in need of protection. Any involvement of school staff in investigation or treatment should be in conjunction with the local child protection unit of the Department of Social Services.

The teacher or other school staff member first suspecting the abuse must make an oral report by telephone or otherwise which includes the following information:

* name, address, and age of student
* name and address of parent/legal guardian or caretaker
* nature and extent of injuries or description of neglect
* any other information that might help to establish the cause of the injuries or condition

The person making the report should tell the principal of the school of any oral or written report submitted in a case of child abuse or neglect.

School staff members who make child abuse or neglect reports must maintain the confidentiality of the information contained in the report. Staff will release this information only to the Department of Social Services or, in the alternative, the county law enforcement agency.

*Option:* ***District Liaison***

*The superintendent will designate a specific person or persons to serve as the district liaison and forward that information to the local child protection unit of the Department of Social Services.*

*It will be the responsibility of the liaison to arrange for training and information necessary to assist staff members in identifying possible instances of child abuse and neglect, including annual updates regarding any changes in the law. Additionally, the liaison is charged with implementing a planned program of personal safety and awareness education, including methods for preventing sexual abuse, which will be* *provided to staff, students, and parents/legal guardians.*

Adopted ^

Legal References:

A. S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:

1. Section 16-3-755 - Sexual battery with a student
2. Section 63-1-10, *et seq.* - South Carolina Children’s Code.
3. Section 63-7-20 - Child protection; definitions.
4. Section 63-7-310, *et seq.* - Persons required to report child abuse and/or neglect.