

CCDCFS POLICY STATEMENT

POLICY NO. 2.03.01

APPROVED BY: William M. Denihan

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 24, 1994

SUBJECT: Investigation of CA/N
Reports From Schools

DATE OF REVISION: March 31, 2000

PURPOSE:

To ensure the consistency of our agency's response to **Child Abuse/Neglect (CA/N)** referrals received from schools or school personnel or individuals associated with schools, except when the person who is alleged to have perpetrated CA/N is an employee of the school.

SCOPE:

This policy pertains to CA/N referrals received from any school, public or private, in Cuyahoga County, **unless the alleged perpetrator (AP) is an employee of the school**. If the AP is an employee, the Report should be handled in accordance with **POLICY NO. 2.03.04 - Special Investigations of Substitute Care Providers**. This policy applies to all of the staff of the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), especially the Social Workers (SWs) working in the Hotline and Intake Departments. **DEFINITION**

POLICY:

A. DCFS will respond promptly to all reports of suspected or alleged child abuse or neglect received from any staff person of any school, public or private, in Cuyahoga County.

1. DCFS's response will be sensitive to the protocols of the school district (and those of individual schools within the districts) as long as they preserve our need to protect the child and do not contaminate the investigative process and as long as they are in accordance with the procedures described below.

B. Reports of child abuse or neglect in which the alleged perpetrator is an **employee of the school (or other substitute care provider)** should be handled in accordance with **POLICY NO. 2.03.04 - Special Investigations of Substitute Care Providers**.

PROCEDURES

A. Because of the special relationship between a teacher and a child, specific information concerning the child's well-being and safety is to be shared with appropriate school personnel, with certain limitations.

(See POLICY NO. 7.04.01 - Confidentiality)

B. Priority assignments for cases referred by school personnel are to be made as usual, based upon the degree of danger to the child.

(See POLICY NO. 2.01.03 - Referrals - Criteria for Agency Intervention)

1. If the school requests immediate intervention in a non-emergency case, the Hotline Supervisor will discuss with the appropriate school personnel the need and rationale for immediate intervention.

2. The Hotline Supervisor will decide what level of response is required.

C. The SW should ask the school to notify the appropriate law enforcement agency if notification is appropriate and/or if police intervention is necessary.

D. Before visiting the school, the SW must call the school and:

1. Leave his/her name and phone number.

2. Notify them of his/her anticipated time of arrival at the school and discuss where to meet with the alleged child victim.

3. Ask the school to keep the child there until the SW arrives to interview the child.

4. Ask the school not to notify or allow the parents access to the child before the interview.

E. Upon arriving at the school, the SW must:

1. Announce his/her presence in the school, in accordance with school protocol: this shall include showing the Cuyahoga County official photo ID card which the SW wears at all times (displayed prominently) .

2. Discuss the allegation in detail with all of the pertinent school personnel, including the child's teacher (in accordance with school protocol).

3. Determine whether the parent(s) are at the school and determine whether the parent(s) have had access to their child prior to the SW's arrival.

4. Interview the child in accordance with school protocol (the school may have staff participate in the interview).
5. Every attempt should be made to interview the parent(s).
 - a) Obtain their viewpoint of the situation and gather all necessary information.
 - b) Inform the parent(s) what will happen next.
 - c) Inform them of any needed medical intervention.
 - d) If it is necessary to transport the child, parental permission should be requested, and parental notification shall occur.
6. If the parent(s) refuse to cooperate and the child is at risk of serious harm, an official designated by the **Juvenile Court** shall be contacted immediately, and arrangements should be initiated for the child to be placed.

F. Following assessment and intervention, the SW will:

1. Provide instructions about the child's dismissal from school.
2. Advise the School Principal of the disposition of the initial investigation (in accordance with school protocol).
3. Give the school any special instructions needed to ensure that the child is protected while attending school (in accordance with school protocol).
4. Notify the school if the child is placed in foster care outside of the school district, so that school records can be made available to the receiving school (in accordance with school protocol).

G. When the investigation is completed and the disposition has been made:

1. The SW will contact the school to find out if more information is available.
2. If the case is to be transferred, the SW will give the name of the child's new SW to the appropriate person at the school.
3. If there was not reason to open the case for Ongoing Services, the SW will inform the school that the case has been closed.

H. When a child is in attendance in a **Cleveland Board of Education school** and the SW needs to find out which school the child attends, the SW should use the **School of Attendance Inquiry Form (Attachment #1)** according to the following procedures.

1. IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, the **School of Attendance Inquiry Form** can be faxed *after the fact*, and the SW can simply call the **Office of Pupil Adjustment (216) 523-8499**, and verbally request the information.

a) When calling, the SW must know the child(ren)'s name(s) and birthdate(s), and the name of the parent(s) or legal custodian(s).

b) The Office of Pupil Adjustment will also ask the SW for a Case Manager No. and Chief 's name (for employment verification purposes).

c) In many cases the Office of Pupil Adjustment will find out the information while the SW holds on the phone. If that is not possible, they will call the SW back within 15 minutes with the information.

d) The School of Attendance Inquiry Form **MUST** be faxed (**FAX: 523-8496**) to the Office of Pupil Adjustment as soon as possible (so the Board of Education has a hard copy of an official request).

2. IN NON-EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, the **School of Attendance Inquiry Form** should be faxed to the **Office of Pupil Adjustment (FAX: 523-8496)**.

a) The SW needs to fill out the School of Attendance Form down to the part to be filled out by the Office of Pupil Adjustment and sign the form on the appropriate line.

b) Then the SW should fax the form to the Office of Pupil Adjustment. They will fill out their part of the form and fax it back. **Make sure you put a fax number on the form** (so that you will get it back).

[NOTE: the Phone Number, Fax Number and the Address of the Office of Pupil Adjustment are the same as on the School of Attendance Inquiry Form.]