Hickman County Board of Education

	Descriptor Term: **Reporting Child Abuse**	Descriptor Code: **6.409**	Issued Date: **05/03/21**
		Rescinds: **6.409**	Issued: **10/05/20**

General

The Director of Schools shall:[1]

1. Designate one employee as the Child Abuse Coordinator (the Coordinator) and an additional employee to serve as the Alternate Child Abuse Coordinator (the Alternate) for each school;

2. Require that the Coordinator and the Alternate receive appropriate training;

3. Supply the Coordinator with all necessary resources;

4. Ensure that all employees working directly with students annually complete the child abuse training program required by state law.[2]

The Coordinator shall assist any employee with appropriately reporting and responding to instances of child abuse or child sexual abuse.

REPORTING

All personnel shall be alert for any evidence of child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect.[3] If personnel know or have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect, a report shall be filed immediately with the Coordinator, the Department of Children's Services (DCS), and law enforcement.[4] When alleged abuse involves someone employed by, previously employed by, or otherwise affiliated with the school, the report may be made directly to the DCS and law enforcement prior to notifying the Coordinator.[5]

The report shall include, to the extent known by the reporter:[5]

1. The name, address, telephone number, and age of the child;

2. The name, telephone number, and address of the parents or persons having custody of the child;

3. The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect; and

4. Any evidence to the cause or any other information that may relate to the cause or extent of the abuse or neglect.

The Director of Schools/designee shall develop reporting procedures, including sample indicators of abuse and neglect, and shall disseminate the procedures to all school personnel.

CONFIDENTIALITY

District employees shall keep all information regarding any child abuse confidential in accordance with state law.

INVESTIGATIONS

School administrators and employees have a duty to cooperate, provide assistance, and information in child abuse investigations[6] including permitting DCS teams to conduct interviews while the child is at school. The principal may control the time, place, and circumstances of the interview but may not insist that a school employee be present even if the suspected abuser is a school employee or another student. The principal is not in violation of any laws by failing to inform parent(s)/guardian(s) that the child is to be interviewed even if the suspected abuser is not a member of the child's household.[7]

Legal References

1. Public Acts of 2020, Chapter No. 708
2. TCA 37-1-408
3. TCA 37-1-403(a)(1); TCA 37-1-412; TCA 37-1-602; TCA 37-1-605(a)(4)
4. TCA 37-1-403(a)(2); Public Acts of 2020, Chapter No. 708
5. TCA 37-1-403(b)
6. TCA 37-1-611(b)
7. Tenn. Op. Atty. Gen. No. 87-101 (June 9, 1987)

Cross References

Recommendations and File Transfers 5.203
Staff-Student Relations 5.610
Interrogations and Searches 6.303
Student Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, Cyber-bullying, and Intimidation 6.304
Title IX & Sexual Harassment 6.3041
Promoting Student Welfare 6.400