

**SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

The Muhlenberg School Board recognizes the need to consider suspected child abuse as an emergency requiring immediate action by School District personnel.

The Superintendent or his/her designee is responsible for implementation of a program of appropriate action in cases of suspected child abuse.

**Legal References:**

A copy of these references is on file in the Assistant Superintendent's Office and in each building principal's office.

1. Child Protective Services Law Title 23 PA CSA Chapter 63
2. Amendments to Juvenile Court Act 333 SB 757 – Act 41 8/3/77
3. PA School Code – Sections 1353, 1354
4. PA Law Act 1994-151

Policy: 3.20  
Adopted: 3/16/83  
Amended: 3/19/86

**SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

I. Suspected Child Abuse

- A. Any school staff member who has reasonable cause to suspect that a student has been physically/mentally or sexually abused must notify the principal and/or the school nurse or guidance counselor immediately.
- B. If physical abuse is suspected, the school nurse will examine the child and describe the findings in the health records.
- C. If reasonable cause is determined to exist, the school employee designated in 1A immediately reports the suspected child abuse to ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313. The employee or designee may be directed to contact the local county office of Children and Youth Services at 610-478-6700.
- D. If difficulty exists in determining whether reasonable cause of suspected abuse exists, after consulting with the building principal, the employee may call Berks County Children and Youth Services and discuss the information with staff in the Screening Unit to determine whether a report should be made.
  - 1. The employee must also complete a written report of suspected child abuse (CY-47). See attached copy. This form must be submitted within 48 hours (of the oral report to ChildLine) to Berks County Children and Youth Services at Berks County Services Center, 633 Court Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, Reading, PA 19601-3588.
  - 2. The employee should also notify Berks County Children and Youth Services at 610-478-6700.

II. Suspected Sexual Abuse

- A. Any school staff member suspecting that a student has been sexually abused must report this to the principal immediately.
- B. The principal or his/her designee shall notify the Assistant Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. A determination shall be made on whether or not the steps below shall be implemented.
- C. The principal or his/her designee and the Assistant Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall consider the option to notify the local law enforcement agency about the alleged incident. If necessary, the principal or his/her designee shall contact the appropriate police and/or the District Attorney's office.
- D. Within 48 hours of receipt of information of suspected sexual abuse, the principal or his/her designee shall report or cause a report to be made in compliance with the Child Protective Services Law using the authorized form CY-47-3-76 (Attachment A).

III. Chronic Neglect

- A. When there is observable evidence or reported information of suspected chronic neglect of a student, the school staff member shall refer the case to the building principal or his/her designee who shall report it to the Assistant Superintendent. Staff shall document incidents and proceed with same steps as Child Abuse.
- B. Following an investigation of the suspected chronic neglect, the Assistant Superintendent or his/her designee upon determination of the validity of the suspected chronic neglect shall make a referral orally to the Berks County Children and Youth Social Service Agency.

IV. General

A. Mandated Reporters

- 1. Mandated reporters, by law, (CPSL, Title 23 PA Chapter 63 Section 6312, 6313) must report suspected abuse when they come into contact with children in the course of their employment. You must report when you have reason to suspect, on the basis of your medical, professional, or other training and experience that a child coming before you in your professional or official capacity is an abused child.
- 2. As mandated reporters, it is your responsibility to refer all cases of suspected abuse to ChildLine (1-800-932-0313) and to Berks County Children and Youth Services (610-478-6700). You must follow up with a completed CY47 form mailed to the agency.

B. Immunity from Liability

- 1. Any person, hospital, institution, school, facility or agency participating in good faith in making a report, cooperating with an investigation...shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise result by reason of such action.

C. Agency Cooperation

- 1. Cooperation with an investigation shall include, but shall not be limited to, a school or school district which permits authorized personnel from the department (of Public Welfare) or child protection services to interview a student while the student is in attendance at school.”