

Board of Education Policy 4.4900
Administrative Procedure

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

The current *child abuse reporting law*, which is a part of the Juvenile Code effective since 1980, does not distinguish between professionals and other citizens. It requires reporting by any person or institution that has *cause to suspect* that a child is abused or neglected.

Each school is required to promote awareness on the part of all personnel of the responsibility they have for the safety of children related to this legislation. In order to address this responsibility, the following procedure is to be followed within the system:

1. All school social workers and school counselors will maintain up-to-date knowledge of all aspects of the law pertaining to child abuse and neglect.
2. K-12 school administrators are expected to provide adequate time for the counselor and/or social worker to provide annual training for staff and orientation for new staff members on how to identify possible signs of abuse and/or neglect, and how to make reports to the Child Protective Services Section of the Catawba County Department of Social Services.
3. Schools are encouraged to document employee participation in annual staff updates.
4. Classroom teachers and/or non-certified staff who question whether or not they have *cause to suspect* abuse or neglect are encouraged to consult with the school counselor and/or school social worker. However, consulting with the school counselor and/or school social worker does not relieve the staff member from the duty to report.
5. The person having the *cause to suspect* should make the report *without delay* by contacting the Catawba County Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services. Reports can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
6. In cases where a child has disclosed physical abuse (injury) or sexual abuse, it is imperative that parents not be contacted by school staff. Child Protective Services staff will make parent contact.
7. All considerations, discussions, and reports should be maintained in strict confidence unless there is a *need to know* on the part of a staff member. Even then, only information there is a *need to know* should be shared.
8. School personnel making a report are encouraged to share with the school administrator when and on whom a report is made without sharing specific details.
9. Schools are expected to maintain a cooperative working relationship with Department of Social Services Child Protective Services representatives.

Superintendent's Signature _____ Date _____