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Child Protection and Child Abuse Protocol

Child abuse is a grave and often self-perpetuating problem that knows no social barriers. Violence in the family is often physically and always emotionally devastating, not only to the child but also to the entire family.

The Child & Family Services Act, subsection 18, states "...Every person who in the course of his professional or official duties has reason to suspect that a child has suffered or is suffering from abuse that may have been caused or permitted by a person who has or had charge of the child, shall forthwith report the suspected abuse to the director of a child caring agency".

In accordance with this Act and with the established 1989 Manitoba Guidelines on Identifying and Reporting A Child in Need of Protection and the 1996 Child Protection and Child Abuse: Protocols for Teachers all Division staff shall report any suspected abuse using the procedures outlined in the divisional policy.

A. Procedures for reporting Child Abuse

1. In cases where any person employed by, or associated with, the Pine Creek School Division has reasonable or probable cause to suspect child abuse, he or she shall telephone these suspicions to Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba, Portage la Prairie (204-857-8751), and then inform the principal that a report has been made.
2. It is noted that the legal responsibility to report lies with the person who suspects the child may be in need of protection. This responsibility cannot be transferred. However, in situations where the person is unclear as to the meaning of "in need of protection" or "abuse"; he/she shall inquire or consult with the child caring agency. This inquiry or consultation is to be distinguished from formal reporting. If, as a result of this inquiry, it is determined that there are insufficient grounds to proceed with a formal report, the person may approach the school principal, who may arrange for case conferencing or for the provision for divisional support services.
3. School Division staff or persons reporting the suspected abuse shall not contact the child's family, or the suspected perpetrator, or any other persons to inform or to further investigate the cause or circumstances of the suspected abuse. The responsibility for investigation and follow-up lies with the outside agencies. In accordance with the revised 1989 Manitoba Guidelines, the Child and Family services agency should inform the school of its findings at the earliest possible time.
4. The school shall cooperate with the authorized persons and professionals in the mutual sharing of information necessary for the investigation and treatment process. With the exception of the transmittal to authorized persons of information necessary in the conduct of investigation and treatment, information related to allegations or suspicions of child abuse is to be held in strict confidence.

B. Staff Knowledge of Policy (also in policy manual)

Principals shall ensure that all members of their staffs are familiar with this policy and are adequately trained to be aware of the signs of child abuses and to be knowledgeable concerning reporting procedures.

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