Jefferson County Education Service District

Code: JHFE/GBNAB-AR(1)
Revised/Reviewed: 10/02/24

Reporting of Suspected Abuse of a Child

Reporting

Any ESD employee having reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom the employee comes in contact has suffered abuse[1] shall make a report immediately to the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) through the centralized child abuse reporting system[2] or to a law enforcement agency within the county where the person making the report is at the time of their contact. Any ESD employee who has reasonable cause to believe that any person[3] with whom the employee is in contact has abused a child shall immediately report in the same manner.

Any ESD employee who has reasonable cause to believe that another ESD employee, contractor, agent, volunteer or student has engaged in abuse, or that a student has been subjected to abuse by another ESD employee, contractor, agent, volunteer or student shall immediately report such to DHS through its centralized child abuse reporting system or to a law enforcement agency, and to the designated licensed administrator or alternate licensed administrator for their school building.

The report must contain, if known, the names and addresses of the child and the parents of the child or other persons responsible for the child's care, the child's age, the nature and extent of the suspected abuse, including any evidence of previous abuse, the explanation given for the suspected abuse, any other information that the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the possible cause of the suspected abuse and the identity of a possible perpetrator.

If the superintendent is the alleged abuser the report shall be submitted to the HR Coordinator who shall refer the report to the Board chair.

A written record of the abuse report shall be made by the employee reporting the suspected abuse of a student and will include: name and position of the person making the report; name of the student; name and position of any witness; description of the nature and extent of the abuse, including any information which could be helpful in establishing cause of abuse and identity of the abuser; description of how the report was made (i.e., phone or other method); name of the agency and individual who took the report; date and time that the report was made; and name of ESD administrator who received a copy of the written report.

The written record of the abuse report shall not be placed in the student's educational record. A copy of the written report shall be retained by the employee making the report and a copy shall be provided to the designee that received the report.

When the designee receives a report of suspected abuse of a child by an ESD employee, and there is reasonable cause to support the report, the ESD shall place the ESD employee on paid administrative leave[4] and take necessary actions to ensure the student's safety. The employee shall remain on leave until DHS or law enforcement determines that the report is substantiated and the ESD takes the appropriate employment action, or cannot be substantiated or is not a report of abuse and the ESD determines that either 1) an employment policy was violated and the ESD will take appropriate employment action against

the employee, or 2) an employment policy has not be violated and no action is required by the ESD against the employee.

When the designee receives a report of suspected abuse by a contractor, agent or volunteer, the ESD may prohibit the contractor, agent or volunteer from providing services to the ESD

The written record of each reported incident of abuse of a child, action taken by the ESD and any findings as a result of the report shall be maintained by the ESD.

If, following the investigation, the ESD decides to take an employment action, the ESD will inform the ESD employee of the employment action to be taken and provide information about the appropriate appeal process.

If the ESD is notified that the employee decided not to appeal the employment action or if the determination of an appeal sustained the employment action, a record of the findings of the substantiated report and the employment action taken by the ESD will be placed in the records on the school employee maintained by the ESD. Such records created are confidential and not public records as defined in Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 192.311, however the ESD may use the record as a basis for providing information required to be disclosed about an ESD employee under ORS 339.378(1). The ESD will notify the employee that information about substantiated reports may be disclosed to a potential employer.

Definitions

1. Oregon law defines “abuse” in ORS 419B.005(1).

2. “Child” means an unmarried person who is under 18 years of age or a child in care, as defined in ORS 418.257.

3. A “substantiated report” means a report of abuse that a law enforcement agency or DHS determines is founded.

Confidentiality of Records

The name, address and other identifying information about the employee who made the report are confidential and are not accessible for public inspection.

Upon request from law enforcement or DHS the ESD shall immediately provide requested documents or materials to the extent allowed by state and federal law.

Failure to Comply

Any ESD employee who fails to report a suspected abuse of a child as provided by this policy and the prescribed Oregon law commits a violation punishable by law. An ESD employee who fails to comply with the confidentiality of records requirements commits a violation punishable by the prescribed law. If an employee fails to report suspected abuse of a child or fails to maintain confidentiality of records as required by policy or this administrative regulation, the employee will be disciplined up to and including dismissal.

Cooperation with Investigator

The ESD staff shall make every effort in suspected abuse of a child cases to cooperate with investigating officials as follows:

1. Any investigation of abuse of a child will be directed by the DHS or law enforcement officials as required by law. DHS or law enforcement officials wishing to interview a student shall present themselves at the school office and contact the school administrator unless the school administrator is the subject of the investigation. If the student is to be interviewed at the school, the administrator or designee shall make a private space available. The administrator or designee of the school may, at the discretion of the investigator, be present to facilitate the interview. If the investigating official does not have adequate identification the administrator shall refuse access to the student.

Law enforcement officials wishing to remove a student from the premises shall present themselves at the office and contact the administrator or designee. The law enforcement official shall sign the student out in accordance with ESD procedures;

2. When the subject matter of the interview or investigation is identified to be related to suspected abuse of a child, ESD employees shall not notify parents or anyone else other than DHS or law enforcement agency and any school employee necessary to enable the investigation;

3. The administrator or designee shall advise the investigator of any conditions of disability prior to any interview with the affected child;

4. ESD employees are not authorized to reveal anything that transpires during an investigation in which the employee participates, nor shall the information become part of the student's education records, except that the employee may testify at any subsequent trial resulting from the investigation and may be interviewed by the respective litigants prior to any such trial.

Nothing prevents the ESD from conducting its own investigation, unless another agency requests to lead the investigation or requests the ESD to suspend their investigation, or taking an employment action based on information available to the ESD before an investigation conducted by another agency is completed. The ESD will cooperate with agencies assigned to conduct such investigations.

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[1] Includes the neglect of a child; abuse is defined in ORS 419B.005.

[2] How to report abuse or neglect: Oregon DHS. Call 855-503-SAFE (7233)

[3] "Person" could include adult, student or other child.

[4] The ESD employee cannot be required to use any accrued leave during the imposed paid administrative leave.