

## POLICY ON IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

The Board acknowledges the Manitoba Guidelines on Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse issued on April 13, 1984 and attached to this policy for information.

The Board adopts the following for the guidance of staff in complying with the Guidelines:

### 1. Identifying Abuse

Specific signs and symptoms by which child abuse may be recognized are contained in the Teachers Protocol on Child Abuse prepared by the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Definitions of reportable abuse may be found in the Manitoba Guidelines. Where it is unclear whether a child is the victim of abuse it is recommended that the School Principal and either the local Child and Family Services Worker or the Police be consulted.

### 2. Procedures for Reporting

(a) In cases where a staff member has reasonable or probable cause to suspect child abuse, he or she shall inform the principal of the school of these suspicions and of the fact that a report is being made and shall make an oral report as soon as possible to one of:

- 1) Child and Family Services
- 2) The Police

It is to be noted that the legal responsibility to report lies with the person who suspects the abuse and cannot be transferred.

(b) In cases where a report is made, school staff shall not contact the child's family, or the suspected perpetrator, or other persons to inform or to further investigate the cause or circumstances of the suspected abuse. This is the role and responsibility of the police or child care agency.

(c) In cases where grounds for suspecting abuse are of an ambiguous or uncertain nature the staff member is encouraged to 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 staff member may nevertheless approach the principal of the school who may arrange for case conferencing or for the provision of support services from the appropriate resource people.

3. Investigation and Follow Up

The responsibility for investigation and follow-up lies with the outside agencies. In accordance with the Manitoba Guidelines, the child caring agency is expected to inform the school of action taken on the report at the earliest appropriate time.

4. Documentation of Reports and Information Sharing

When a report of child abuse is made the reporter may wish to make a written record of the details of the report for later reference. While a written record may be useful for later reference it should be clear that written reports are not required by law and could be open to breaches of confidentiality.

With the exception of the transmittal to authorized persons of information necessary in the conduct of investigation and treatment, information related to the allegations or suspicions of child abuse is to be held in strict confidence. In particular, any written records, notations or reports are to be considered confidential and are not to be placed in the child's regular or cumulative record or in any other way allowed to become known to persons who have no legitimate need for such information.

5. Protection for Informant

Subsection 36(4) of the Child Welfare Act provided that "...no action lies against a person who reports information to the director or a child caring agency in accordance with this section unless the reporting of this information was done maliciously or without reasonable or probable cause."

Approved March 8, 1988  
Reviewed October 18, 1994