

SECTION Q
REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Because of their regular contact with school-age children, school employees are in an excellent position to identify abused or neglected children.

To comply with State Statutes, it is the policy of the Sioux Valley School District 5-5 that any teacher or other school employee who suspects that a child under 18 years of age has been neglected or physically abused (including sexual or emotional abuse) by any person, including parent or other person, other than by accidental means, shall report in writing to the Principal, who shall then immediately report to the States Attorney, or to the Department of Social Services, or to the County Sheriff, or to the City Police. The Principal who reported the suspected abuse shall inform the school employee initiating the action within 24 hours and in writing that the report has been made. The employee shall make the report directly to the proper authorities if the Principal fails to do so.

The report shall contain the following information: name, address and age of the child; name and address of parent or caretaker; nature and extent of injuries or description of neglect; any other information that might help establish the cause of the injuries or condition.

School employees, including administrators shall not contact the child's family or any other person to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect. It is not the responsibility of the school employees to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, or to determine whether the child is in need of protection. A school employee's responsibility is limited to reporting his/her suspicion of abuse or neglect.

Any personal interview or physical inspection of the child should be conducted in a considerate, professional manner and information or records concerning reports of suspected abuse or neglect are confidential and the release to persons other than provided by law is punishable by a \$1,000 fine, one year in jail, or both. Failure to make a report where abuse or neglect is suspected is subject to the same punishment.

Anyone who participates in making a report in accordance with the law and in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability that may otherwise arise from the reporting or from any resulting judicial proceeding even if the suspicion is proved to be unfounded.

Copies of this policy shall be distributed by the Superintendent or his/her designee to all school employees at the beginning of each school term and to new employees when they begin employment if at a different time than the beginning of the school term.

The Board of Education will support any employee making a report of suspected child abuse or neglect unless it is determined that the employee was acting in bad faith in making the report.

Legal References: SDCL 26-7A, 26-8A, B, C

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT FORM

Date of Report _____ Person to Whom Report is Submitted _____

Name of Person Reporting Suspected Abuse _____

Name, Address & Age of Child Suspected To Be A Victim of Abuse/Neglect:

Name & Address of Parent or Caretaker: _____

Name & Address of Person(s) Suspected of Abusing/Neglecting Child: _____

Description of Suspected Abuse/Neglect. Nature & Extent of Injuries or Neglect. _____

Other Information That May Help Establish the Cause of the Injuries or Condition: _____

Suspicion of Abuse/Neglect Reported to (Agency/Person's Name) _____

Date Report Was Made _____ Name of Person Making Report _____

Comments: _____