

Northfield Reads & Counts Tutor Manual

**St. Olaf College and Carleton College
Northfield Public Schools**

Section 2: Guidelines for Reporting Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect

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Guidelines for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

All persons who work with children in Minnesota are required by law to report suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of children to the local Police and/or Social Services Department, including any suspected abuse or neglect occurring within the preceding three years. Anyone who is required to report suspected abuse or neglect and fails to do so is guilty of a misdemeanor.

If you believe that a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, talk first to the staff at your tutoring site. You only see the student for an hour or two a week, so teachers and staff may have background information about which you are unaware. Also, discuss the situation with the Tutoring Coordinator.

If, after talking to the teacher with whom you work, you believe that you need to report the suspected neglect or abuse, do so immediately. Call the child protection unit in Rice County to make a verbal report, which will need to be followed by a written report within three business days. The staff at Rice County Child Protection Services is always available and willing to answer questions or advise a reporter about the appropriateness of a report.

Northfield Child Protection unit: 507-645-4723

If the child has been abandoned or is subject to an immediate threat, call the Police Department immediately. Law enforcement officers are the only persons who may remove a minor from a threatening environment.

Child Protection Services will need certain information from the reporter to be in the initial verbal report. It is the responsibility of Child Protection Services to investigate all reports of abuse and neglect and to offer appropriate services directed toward protection of children and improvement of the family situation. Thus, when you call in a report, they will need information to identify the family and evaluate the problem so they can respond quickly and appropriately. They need to know what happened to the child and when the abuse occurred. How did you find out about this situation and what is your first-hand knowledge? Where is the child now and is the child currently in danger? Child Protection Services will also need to know the names and addresses of the parent(s) or caretaker(s) and your name and phone number.

After the verbal report is made, you are required to submit a written report within three business days. Social workers at Child Protection Services are a good resource for any questions or difficulties encountered during this process.

Anyone who reports child abuse or neglect in good faith is immune from civil liability. The reporter's name is confidential, accessible only if the reporter consents or by court order.

Indicators of a Child's Need for Protection

Physical Abuse

Child neglect is the continued failure by parents or caretakers to provide a child with needed care and protection. The following are conditions under which the law requires a report to Child Protection Services: inadequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care.

Physical Indicators

- ❑ Unexplained bruises (in various stages of healing), welts, human bite marks, bald spots
- ❑ Unexplained burns, especially cigarette burns or immersion burns (glove like)
- ❑ Unexplained fractures, lacerations, or abrasion

Attitude Indicators

- ❑ Self-destructive
- ❑ Withdrawn or aggressive behavior extremes
- ❑ Uncomfortable with physical contact
- ❑ Arrives at school early or stays late as if afraid to be at home
- ❑ Complains of soreness or moves with discomfort
- ❑ Wears clothing inappropriate to the weather that covers the body
- ❑ Chronic runaway (adolescents)

Physical Neglect

Physical abuse is any physical or mental injury, or threatened injury, inflicted on a child by a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's care other than by accidental means; or any physical injury that cannot reasonably be explained by the history of injuries provided by the person responsible for the child's care.

Physical Indicators

- ❑ Abandonment
- ❑ Unattended medical needs
- ❑ Consistent lack of supervision
- ❑ Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, or poor hygiene
- ❑ Lice, distended stomach, emaciation

Attitude Indicators

- ❑ Self destructive
- ❑ Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep in class
- ❑ Steals food, begs from classmates
- ❑ Reports no caretaker at home
- ❑ Frequently absent or tardy
- ❑ School dropout (adolescents)

Emotional Maltreatment

Physical Indicators

- ❑ Ulcers, asthma, severe allergies
- ❑ Speech disorders
- ❑ Delayed physical development
- ❑ Substance abuse

Attitude Indicators

- ❑ Habit disorder (sucking, rocking)
- ❑ Antisocial, destructive
- ❑ Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)
- ❑ Developmentally delayed
- ❑ Passive and aggressive behavioral extremes
- ❑ Delinquent behavior (adolescents)

Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation of a minor. Sexual abuse occurs when a child is manipulated, forced, or tricked into touch or sexual contact. It can also occur without touch, including times when a child is subjected to or exposed to obscene speech.

Physical Indicators

- ❑ Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- ❑ Pain or itching in genital area
- ❑ Difficulty walking or sitting
- ❑ Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia
- ❑ Venereal disease
- ❑ Frequent urinary or yeast infection

Attitude Indicators

- ❑ Withdrawal, chronic depression
- ❑ Excessive seductiveness
- ❑ Role reversal, overly concerned for siblings
- ❑ Poor self-esteem, self-devaluative, lack of confidence
- ❑ Peer problems, lack of involvement
- ❑ Massive weight change

Reporting of Maltreatment to Minors Act

What follows are excerpts from the Reporting of Maltreatment to Minors Act, Minnesota Statutes, Section 626.556. For more information about child abuse and neglect and a complete copy of the Act, contact the Tutoring Coordinator.

Subdivision 1. **Public Policy.** The legislature hereby declares that the public policy of this state is to protect children whose health or welfare may be jeopardized through physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse. In furtherance of the public policy, it is the intent of this legislature under this section to strengthen the family and make the home, school, and community safe for children by promoting responsible child care in all settings; and to provide, when necessary, a safe temporary or permanent home environment for physically or sexually abused or neglected children.

In addition, it is the policy of this state to require the reporting of neglect, physical or sexual abuse of children in the home, school, and community settings; to provide for the voluntary reporting of abuse or neglect of children; to require the assessment and investigation of the reports; and to provide protective and counseling services in appropriate cases.

Subdivision 2. **Definitions.** As used in this section, the following terms have the meanings given them unless the specific content indicates otherwise;

- (b) “Person responsible for the child’s care” means (1) an individual functioning within the family unit and having responsibilities for the care of the child such as a parent, guardian or other person having similar care responsibilities, or (2) an individual functioning outside the family unit and having responsibilities for the care of the child as a teacher, school administrator, or other lawful custodian of a child having either full-time or short term care responsibilities including, but not limited to, day care, baby-sitting, whether paid or unpaid, counseling, teaching, and coaching.

Subdivision 3. **Persons mandated to report.**

(a) A person who knows or who has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, as defined in subdivision 2, or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, shall immediately report the information to the local welfare agency, police department, or the county sheriff if the person is:

- (1) a professional or professional’s delegate who is engaged in the practice of healing arts, social services, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, childcare, education, or law enforcement; or
- (2) employed as a member of the clergy and received the information while engaged in ministerial duties, provided that a member of the clergy is not required by this subdivision to report information that is otherwise privileged under section 595.02, subdivision 1, paragraph (c).

The police department or the county sheriff, upon receiving a report, shall immediately notify the local welfare agency orally and in writing. The local welfare agency, upon receiving a report, shall immediately notify the local police department or the county sheriff orally and in writing. The county sheriff and the head of every local welfare agency, department, or office who is responsible for ensuring that the notification duties of this paragraph and paragraph (b) are carried out. Nothing in the subdivision shall be construed to require more than one report from any institution, facility, school, or agency.

- (c) A person mandated to report physical or sexual child abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility shall report the information to the agency responsible for licensing the facility. A health or corrections agency receiving a report may request the local welfare agency to provide assistance pursuant to subdivisions 10, 10a, and 10b.
- (d) Any person mandated to report shall receive a summary of the disposition of any report made by that reporter, unless release would be detrimental to the best interests of the child.

Subdivision 6. Failure to report. A person mandated by this section to report who knows or has reason to believe that a child is neglected or physically or sexually abused, as defined in subdivision 2, or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. A parent, guardian, or caretaker who knows or reasonably should know that the child's health is in serious danger and who fails to report as required by subdivision 2, paragraph (c), is guilty of a gross misdemeanor if the child suffers substantial or great bodily harm because of the lack of medical care. If the child dies because of the lack of medical care, the person is guilty of a felony and may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than two years or to payment of a fine of not more than \$4,000 or both.