

**MEDFORD AREA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
RURAL VIRTUAL ACADEMY**

DATE ADOPTED: March 16, 2017 FILE SECTOR: RURAL VIRTUAL ACADEMY
DATE REVISED: June 27, 2022 POLICY TITLE: CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT
REPORTING

School employees are in an excellent position to identify abused or neglected children and to refer them for treatment and protection because of their sustained contact with school-age children.

It is RVA policy that any staff member who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child observed in the course of their professional duties has been abused or neglected or threatened with abuse or neglect shall report to the child's resident county human services department, following the procedures as outlined in RVA-JHG-R.

It is not the responsibility of school personnel to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, nor to determine whether the child is in need of protection. School personnel shall not contact the child's family or any other person to determine the cause of any suspected abuse or neglect.

No district employee shall be discharged from employment for making such a report. In addition, state law guarantees immunity from any civil or criminal liability that may result from making a report on child abuse or neglect. State law also provides for the protection of the identity of any individual who makes such a report.

CROSS REFERENCE: RVA-JHG-R, JO, & JOB
LEGAL REFERENCE: Sec. 48.02, 48.981 & 118.32 Wis. Stats.

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Definitions

For purposes of implementing board of education policy, the following definitions will be used:

Child - Any person under 18 years of age.

Child Abuse - "Abuse" means any of the following:

- Physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means §948.03;
- Sexual intercourse or "sexual contact" under §940.225(5)(a), 948.02, 948.025, or 948.085;
- Sexual exploitation of a child; as defined under §948.05;
- Permitting, allowing, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution as defined in §944.30;
- Causing a child to view or listen to sexual activity under §948.055;
- For purposes of sexual arousal or gratification, either causing a child to expose genitals or pubic area or exposing genitals or pubic area to a child under §948.10;
- Manufacturing methamphetamine in violation of §961.41(1)(e) under any of the following circumstances:
 - With a child physically present during the manufacture.
 - In a child's home, on the premises of a child's home or in a motor vehicle located on the premises of a child's home.
 - Under any other circumstances in which a reasonable person should have known that the manufacture would be seen, smelled or heard by a child.
- Emotional damage which the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodian has neglected, refused or been unable for reasons other than poverty to obtain necessary treatment or to take steps to ameliorate symptoms.

Child Neglect - "Neglect" means failure, refusal or inability on the part of a caregiver for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.

Reporting and Follow-up Procedures:

- Any employee of the RVA who, in the performance of their professional duties, either suspects or who has good reason to believe that child abuse/neglect has or will occur should, as soon as possible, contact, in person or by phone, the child's resident county human services department and inform the agency of the facts and circumstances contributing to the suspicion of child abuse or neglect or to a belief that abuse will occur. This may be done by the employee or in concert with an RVA administrator, school counselor or school psychologist; however, it is clearly the legal obligation of the suspecting educator to make the referral. If no referral is made, they are legally responsible. The following information will be required:
 - Your name, position, relationship to the child, the school phone number.
 - Child's name, home address and age.
 - Parent(s)/guardian(s) name, address, work place, names and ages of siblings.
 - Description of suspected child abuse and neglect or the threat of child abuse or neglect, statements of the child, statements allegedly made by the child to others, and any surrounding circumstances and conditions in the home of which the reporter is aware.
- Concurrent with the submission of the referral, at the first available opportunity, the staff member will inform an RVA administrator, school counselor or school psychologist of the referral.
- Any person reporting a case may also request an immediate investigation by law enforcement if the person has reason to suspect that the child's health or safety is in immediate danger.
- Any personal interview or physical inspection of the child shall be conducted in a professional manner; in the presence of at least one other staff member and in compliance with c.118.32, §948.50(2)(b) prohibiting strip searches.
- All district personnel will cooperate in every way possible during the course of the investigation by outside agencies and in providing appropriate assistance to the child involved.
- Any repeated suspicions involving the same child should follow the same procedure.
- Resolve doubts in reporting in favor of the child.