

Administrative Procedures

AP-425 CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION EDUCATION AND RESPONSE	Date of implementation: Fall 2006 Date of update: June 2019
	Related Administrative Procedures: AP-411 Protective Services

Purpose: The purpose of the administrative procedure is to address child abuse prevention education, training and awareness of employees regarding child abuse and the duty to report. Subsequently, there are two parts to this administrative procedure: Child Abuse Prevention Education and Response and Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting.

All employees should be aware of and have access to the following guiding documents:

- [Ministry of Education Policy Statement: Child Abuse Prevention Education and Response](#)
- [Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol 2017](#)
- [The Counsel for Children Program and Saskatchewan Schools: A Guide for Working Together to Support Pupils in the School Setting who are Involved in Child Protection Proceedings 2016](#)

Part I: Child Abuse Prevention Education and Response

- *The Education Act* states that principals are responsible for the professional development of staff and overseeing student well-being and the good order, harmony and efficiency of the school.
- Boards of education are also responsible to conduct a continuing program of planning and evaluation with respect to curriculum, pedagogy and effectiveness of instructional programs, including child abuse prevention education.

Part II: Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

- All citizens have a duty to report child abuse or neglect in accordance with provincial legislation. It is important to refer to the *Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol* to meet these legislative requirements.
- All Division employees have a duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect to an appropriate authority (child protection worker, Ministry of Social Services, First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, police officer).

Part I: Child Abuse Prevention Education and Response

The Division directs that all employees engage in training and awareness of child abuse prevention through programs and resources approved by the board of education.

1) Child Abuse Prevention Education

Educators must take appropriate steps to:

- a) Teach child abuse prevention education for all students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 through the required outcomes of Grades 1-9 Health education and extend this learning to other areas of study, where it reasonably applies.
- b) Create a safe environment in order to build trust which may decrease anxiety or additional stress on students exhibiting signs of abuse.
- c) Provide meaningful learning environments related to child abuse prevention education.
- d) Provide communication with parents/caregivers, when appropriate, related to child abuse prevention education and how it will be introduced in the classroom.
- e) Provide age appropriate educational experiences and learning resources.

2) Professional Development and Supports

School division personnel/school administrators must take appropriate steps to:

- a) Engage all staff in professional development opportunities provided by qualified professionals to identify the signs of child abuse.
- b) Develop relationships with qualified human services agencies to develop and maintain community contacts (e.g. healing resources, traumatic stress counsellors).
- c) Provide training and awareness to assist staff in understanding their legal duty to report child abuse.

Educators are encouraged to practice self-care by seeking professional help when needed.

Note:

- a) Professional development may include discussions at team meetings, presentations to employees, distribution of government pamphlets and publications, and more.
- b) Disclosure of abuse may arise when child abuse is the topic within the classroom. See the *Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol* and Duty to Report.

Part II: Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

All citizens have a duty to report child abuse in accordance with provincial legislation. Accordingly, all employees of the Division have a duty to report suspected child abuse to an appropriate authority (child protection worker, Ministry of Social Services, First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, police officer). The Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol will assist with meeting these legislative requirements.

The Division directs that all employees who have reasonable grounds to believe that there is a child in need of protection from abuse report the matter immediately to an appropriate authority in accordance with *The Child and Family Services Act* and/or *The Emergency Protection of Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation Act*. All employees shall follow the Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol and this Administrative Procedure.

The Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol describes what constitutes child abuse or neglect as defined in section 11 of *The Child and Family Services Act*. The Protocol also describes the roles and responsibilities of service providers and the process by which they must respond. Employees shall work collaboratively with child protection agencies, police, and any other service providers with authorized involvement.

All local school guidelines (e.g. Principal's Handbook) must be consistent with the Protocol and this Administrative Procedure.

Procedure:

- 1) Duty to Report Abuse or Neglect by a Parent/Caregiver
 - a) Any employee of the Division who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child under the age of 16 is in need of protection shall immediately report this information to a child protection worker, Ministry of Social Services, First Nations Child and Family Services Agency and/or a police officer (see section 12 of *The Child and Family Services Act*. *Note:* The duty to report is a personal "Duty to Report" and it cannot be delegated to another individual.) Even if you believe someone else is reporting the situation, you still have a duty to report. The duty to report suspected child abuse overrides any duty to protect the privacy of students.
 - b) The circumstances in which a child may be in need of protection include, but are not limited to, the following examples of abuse or neglect by a parent/caregiver:
 - i) Physical abuse;
 - ii) Sexual abuse and exploitation;
 - iii) Physical neglect;
 - iv) Emotional maltreatment;
 - v) Exposure to domestic violence or severe domestic disharmony; or
 - vi) The child has committed an act that if the child were 12 years of age or more would constitute a criminal offence and family services are necessary to prevent a recurrence.

c) Youth age 16 and 17

- i) While it is not legally required, abuse or neglect by a parent of a young person aged 16 or 17 may be reported to child protection services and/or police in order to obtain assistance for the young person.

2) Duty to Report Sexual Exploitation

- a) Any employee of the Division who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child under the age of 18 has been, or is likely to be, subjected to sexual abuse shall immediately report this information to a child protection worker and/or police officer.
- b) Child sexual abuse occurs when a child under the age of 18 has been, or is likely to be, exposed to harmful interaction for a sexual purpose, including involvement in prostitution and/or Criminal Code offenses (see section 4 of *The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act*).

3) Duty to Report Child at Risk Due to Other Practices Prohibited Under Canadian Law

The Criminal Code of Canada prohibits the marriage of children under 16 whether it occurs in Canada (section 293.2) or if a child is removed from Canada for that purpose (section 273.3 (d)). The Criminal Code also treats female genital mutilation as a criminal act (section 268 (4)). A child at risk from the above practices is at risk of physical and/or sexual and emotional abuse and these situations should be reported.

4) Receiving Disclosures of Abuse from a Child

Regardless of the type of abuse a child reports, all disclosures must be treated in a similar manner. If a child makes a disclosure:

- Listen openly and control your reaction;
- Reassure the child that they are safe and this is not their fault;
- Do not correct language and let the child report the incident in their own words;
- Record what the child has reported and your observations; and
- Avoid making promises that cannot be kept (e.g. "I won't tell anyone. I will keep this secret.")

5) Reporting

a) Reasonable grounds to believe:

- i) Is subjective;
- ii) Can be based on personal observation or discussion;
- iii) Does not require proof;

- iv) Can be based on assumptions or credible second-hand information;
 - v) Can take into account the training and experience of the person reporting; and
 - vi) Can still be reasonable even if it turns out eventually to be untrue.
- b) The employee making the report shall take the following steps:
- i) The employee cannot delegate the duty to report to another individual. The employee must make the report and can be supported by others if needed.
 - ii) The employee shall make the report by telephone or in-person to a child protection worker, Ministry of Social Services, First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, and/or a police officer.
 - iii) The employee may enlist the support of the principal or school counsellor in making the report.
 - iv) The employee must inform the principal a report has been made to a child protection worker or police officer about a suspected case of child abuse, unless the principal is the subject of the report. In such case, the notification that a report has been made shall be provided to the superintendent.
 - v) The employee shall also create a written report of the information received and steps taken. (*Appendix B – Report of Suspected Child Abuse*).
- c) Once the principal is informed, the principal must support the employee in reporting. This can include allowing for a peer support or counsellor to accompany the employee in reporting.
- d) Employees shall not contact the parents/caregivers in situations where the parent/caregiver or the partner of the parent/caregiver is the subject of the report. Doing so in these situations may compromise the investigation. Decisions regarding contact with parents/caregivers shall be made in consultation with Social Services and/or police officers.

If you are concerned a child may be at risk of abuse, immediately contact:

Ministry of Social Services at:

- Prince Albert (North) 1-866-719-6164
- Saskatoon (Centre) 1-800-274-8297
- Local First Nations Child and Family Services Agency
- Local Police

6) Support to the Child

Employees shall provide support to the child, particularly in a situation of disclosure.

- a) Do the following:
 - Validate the child’s right to seek help.
 - State the right to safety.
 - Provide for physical comforts.
- b) Do not do the following:
 - Investigate for “proof”.
 - Question for details.
 - Offer judgments.
 - Tell the child “what will happen”.
 - Remove, alter or contaminate physical evidence.

7) Confidentiality

- a) Employees shall maintain confidentiality of all information. The fact that there is an investigation in progress is in itself confidential.
- b) Records are to be stored, accessed, and disposed in accordance with board policy.
- c) The duty to report suspected child abuse overrides any duty to protect the privacy of students.
- d) To ensure the best course of action is taken in every case, there will be mutual sharing of all relevant information by agencies, third parties and professionals involved in the investigation process. Saskatchewan law not only permits the sharing of information for ensuring child protection; it requires it.

8) Awareness and Supporting Documents

- a) To support the identification and reporting of child abuse, refer to The Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol and the online course available from the Ministry of Social Services [Saskatchewan Duty to Report](#). The protocol and course provide information on the signs of child abuse and identifies each individual’s legal duty to report suspected cases.
- b) Every principal shall ensure that all employees are aware of and have access to the following documents:
 - i) This Administrative Procedure
 - ii) Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol
 - iii) The Counsel for Children Program and Saskatchewan Schools: A Guide for Working Together to Support Pupils in the School Setting who are Involved in Child Protection Proceedings

Note: Awareness for all staff may be accomplished by notices in division offices and school staff rooms, discussions at team meetings, presentations to employees, distribution of government pamphlets and publications, and more.

- c) In addition, Division Counsellors have been trained in using the Canadian Red Cross' *Be Safe*: A personal safety program for children aged 5-9.
- d) There is also support through qualified Human Services Agencies for healing resources and supports that are specific to the surrounding communities in which schools are situated.

Contact: Executive Director, Student Achievement and Supports
Ministry of Education
306-787-6089

References:

[Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol](#)

[The Child and Family Services Act](#)

[The Emergency Protection of Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation Act](#)

[The Counsel for Children Program and Saskatchewan Schools: A Guide for Working Together to Support Pupils in the School Setting who are Involved in Child Protection Proceedings](#)

[Criminal Code of Canada](#)

[The Education Act, 1995](#)

Supporting Resources:

- Online Training Module: [Saskatchewan Duty to Report](#)
- Child Abuse Prevention Education and Response Blackboard Organization will provide access to resources such as the *Child Abuse Protocol*, applicable provincial legislation, the *Child Abuse Prevention Education and Response* policy statement and additional supports as they are identified.
- Resources are listed on the curriculum [website](#). Teachers are able to sort the recommended learning resources by grade and by curriculum outcome. Learning resources can also be filtered by content, for example, sexual abuse and exploitation. Resources will be added as identified.
- Curriculum Connections: a resource document that identifies curricular outcomes that can be connected to child abuse prevention education.
- [Saskatchewan Advocate for Children & Youth](#)