



## Administrative Procedures

<b>AP-425</b>  <b>REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT</b>  (previously Child Abuse Prevention Education and Response)	<b>Date of implementation:</b> Fall 2006 <b>Date of update:</b> March 12, 2025
	<b>Related Administrative Procedures:</b> <a href="#">AP-412 Access to Schools</a>

**Purpose:** All citizens in Saskatchewan have a legal duty to report child abuse or neglect in accordance with provincial legislation. Accordingly, all employees of Prairie Spirit School Division Schools have a duty to report suspected child abuse to an appropriate authority (Ministry of Social Services, child protection worker, First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies, or police according to Section 12 of *The Saskatchewan Child and Family Services Act*. The *Saskatchewan [Child Abuse Protocol](#)* will assist with meeting these legislative requirements.

### Procedures:

Any employee who has reasonable grounds to believe there is a child under the age of 18 is or may be in need of protection from abuse, must 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](#).

The *Saskatchewan [Child Abuse Protocol](#)* summarizes what constitutes child abuse based on section 11 of [The Child and Family Services Act](#) and the Criminal Code of Canada. The Protocol also describes the roles and responsibilities of service providers and the process by which they should respond. Employees shall collaborate with child protection agencies, police, and any other service providers with authorized involvement.

#### 1) Duty to Report Abuse or Neglect

- a) Any employee of the Division who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child under the age of 18 is in need of protection must report this information to a child protection worker, Ministry of Social Services, First Nations Child and Family Services Agency and/or police officer. See section 12 of the Child and Family Services Act.
  - i) The duty to report is a personal “Duty to Report” and cannot be delegated to another individual.
  - ii) The duty to report suspected child abuse overrides any duty to protect the privacy of the student(s).

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:

- i) Physical abuse;
- ii) Sexual abuse and exploitation;
- iii) Physical neglect;
- iv) Emotional maltreatment;
- v) Exposure to domestic violence or severe family disharmony;
- 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) Abuse also includes the following as defined in the Criminal Code of Canada and should be reported:

- i) Marriage of children under 16 (section 293.2) or removed from Canada for that purpose.
- ii) Female genital mutilation (section 268(4)).

d) Youth over age 18

- i) While there is no legal requirement to report abuse or neglect involving a student who is 18 years of age or older, employees may contact child protection services and/or police if assistance is required to ensure the safety or well-being of the student, particularly if the student is vulnerable. School division employees may encourage and assist youth over the age of 18 to make a report to police if they are in need of protection.
- ii) Where necessary to protect the mental or physical health or safety of any individual, school division employees may report matters to authorities without specific consent according to section 28(2)(l) of *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

## 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 exploitation must report this information to a child protection services worker and/or police.
- b) Child sexual exploitation 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 offences. See section 4 of the *Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act*.

### 3) Reporting

#### a) Reporting:

- 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 consider the training and experience of the person reporting;
- 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 must make the report as soon as practical 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;
- ii) The duty to report is a personal 'Duty to Report' and cannot be delegated to another individual;
- iii) The employee should seek support from the principal and/or school counsellor in making the report;
- iv) The duty to report is ongoing. An employee who has additional reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse is required to make a further report, even if the employee has already made a previous report or reports related to the same child;
- v) The employee must complete and submit the *Student – Report of Suspected Child Abuse* form on Clevr;
- vi) The employee must inform the principal a report has been made unless the principal is the subject of the report. In such cases, the notification that a report has been made shall be provided to the superintendent of the school. In this case, the report shall be submitted through Clevr by the Superintendent;
- vii) Employees must not contact the person suspected of abuse and will not contact parents/caregivers in situations where the parent/caregiver or the partner of the parent/caregiver is the subject of the report. Any communication regarding the abuse

and/or neglect after it has been reported is the responsibility of the investigating agency.

- c) Students who are 16 years of age or older are to be encouraged and assisted to make a report to the Ministry of Social Services and/or police if they are in need of protection.

#### 4) Receiving Disclosures of Abuse from a Child

- a) Regardless of the type of abuse a child reports, all disclosures shall be treated in a similar manner. If a child makes a disclosure:
  - i) Listen openly and control your reaction;
  - ii) Reassure the child of their right to safety and that this is not their fault;
  - iii) Do not correct language and let the child report the incident in their own words;
  - iv) Avoid probing questions, interpretations or assumptions;
  - v) Do not investigate;
  - vi) Record the child's exact words where possible and document observable behaviours or injuries;
  - vii) Avoid making promises that cannot be kept (e.g., "I won't tell anyone. I will keep this secret.").

#### 5) Interviews Conducted by Police / Child Protection Services at School

- a) Any request from the Ministry of Social Services and / or police to interview a child shall be referred to the principal (or designate).
- b) The principal (or designate) will coordinate arrangements for a confidential interview to occur in circumstances where the allegations involve parents/caregivers and when having the interview at the school is in the best interest of the child.
- c) The child protection worker and /or police will determine who will be at the interview and will consider the child's support needs and comfort level. If a school staff member is requested to attend the interview, they should notify their principal. The principal should seek guidance from their Learning Superintendent and/or Learning Superintendent of Caring, Healthy and Safe Schools.

#### 6) Confidentiality

- a) Employees must maintain confidentiality regarding all information related to suspected abuse or neglect.
- b) The existence of an investigation is confidential.
- c) All information, reports, and discussions relative to the child abuse or neglect will be treated as confidential by every person employed by the Division.
- d) Information must not be shared electronically unless authorized.
- e) Clever records are to be stored, accessed, and disposed of in accordance with AP-519.

#### 7) Annual Review

- a) At the beginning of each school year, principals will review this Administrative Procedure with all staff. Counsellors may assist at the principal's request.

#### 8) Staff Wellness

Staff are reminded and encouraged to access resources as needed to support their wellness as needed.

- [Mental Health Resource list](#)
- [STF Member and Family Assistance Program and Related Health & Wellness Resources](#)
- [Support Staff Employee and Family Assistance Program](#)
- [Headspace](#)

#### References:

[\*The Child and Family Services Act\*](#)

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

[\*Criminal Code of Canada\*](#)

[\*Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol \(2023\)\*](#)

[\*Ministry of Social Services Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting \(fact sheet link: \*Ministry of Social Services office\*\)\*](#)

[\*The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act\*](#)