



## Section Four: Students

*“Together We Learn”*

# 453 – CHILD PROTECTION

## Introduction

The Board of Education believes that the health and welfare of a child is an important element which affects the student's experience and achievement at school. To this end, the Board is committed to providing a safe and caring environment which is conducive to learning and the development of positive interpersonal interactions among students, staff, parents and the community.

## Policy

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support a comprehensive, coordinated and collaborative approach for responding to child abuse and neglect by:

1. providing staff, volunteers and other persons working in schools with training in recognizing signs of child abuse and neglect;
2. providing staff, volunteers and other persons working in schools with direction and training on their legal obligation to report child abuse and neglect to a Child Welfare Worker under the *Child Family and Community Service Act*, to the RCMP where the child is in immediate danger, and to school administration;
3. requiring school officials to investigate and/or report to the RCMP allegations of child abuse involving current and former school district employees, volunteers or contract service providers;
4. establishing a child abuse/neglect reporting and investigation protocol with other responsible agencies, to identify the roles and responsibilities;
5. providing assistance to victims of child abuse and neglect by offering counselling and referrals to other agencies, as appropriate.



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### **Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect**

Child abuse can take physical, sexual, or emotional forms, or may take the form of parental neglect. The descriptions of physical abuse, emotional abuse, emotional harm, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and neglect are contained in the *BC Handbook of Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers (2007)* – pages 23-26.

### **Reporting and Investigation**

The Board acknowledges that responses to reports of child abuse and neglect may involve Board of Education, staff, child welfare and the RCMP.

The Board supports a coordinated and collaborative response to reports of child abuse and neglect between the School District, the RCMP and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

All staff must understand and respect their legal obligation to report child abuse and neglect to a child welfare worker where they have reason to believe that a child is in need of protection within the meaning of the [Child, Family and Community Service Act](#). They also need to comply with their reporting obligations as identified in the *School District Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect* as outlined in the Regulations of this Policy.

School administrators must also understand their role in coordinating with responsible agencies and in investigating allegations of child abuse against school employees, in accordance with the Board’s *Child Protection Reporting and Investigation Procedures* and the interagency child abuse/neglect protocol agreement.

### **Respecting the Rights of Accused Individuals**

The Board acknowledges that individuals under investigation regarding allegations of child abuse or neglect may have contractual or other legal rights during the investigative process. School District investigations will be conducted in a manner that is respectful of these rights.

### **Training and Educational Programs**

The Board requires that school administrators, employees, volunteers and contract service providers who regularly work with or around children receive training on how to recognize signs of child abuse or neglect, how to respond to reports of child abuse or neglect, and standards of conduct for employees, volunteers and service providers governing their interactions with students.

The Superintendent will ensure that appropriate opportunities to receive and/or review training are made available, on an annual basis, to school administrators, school staff, volunteers and contract service providers.



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The Superintendent will ensure that child abuse prevention programs are provided to students in accordance with the Ministry of Education’s prescribed learning outcomes.