



## Reporting A Child in Need of Protection (includes child abuse)

Southeast staff members play a very important role in the lives of students. Because they see students on a regular basis and they can play a supportive role to families., Staff members are often in a position to note some of the early warning signs of abuse or other protection problems. Students may trust a staff member enough to disclose abuse. This policy seeks to ensure that suspicions of a child in need of protection will be properly reported and that staff will act appropriately and with confidentiality.

In Manitoba, regulations under Section 18 of *The Child and Family Services Act (CFS Act) (1999)* state that every school staff member must report any case of suspected abuse relating to a child attending school. The *CFS Act* states that anyone who has information that leads the staff member to reasonably believe that a child is being or has been abused or is in need of protection or might be in need of protection must report this suspicion. Suspicions that a student is in need of protection must be reported to a Child and Family Services Agency or the police or medical personnel when there is reason to be concerned that the student's home or custodial environment cannot protect the student.

Child abuse, under the *Act*, is a condition that occurs due to the act or omission of any person. This could include a parent, guardian, teacher, babysitter, child care worker, coach, or anyone in a trusting relationship with a child. The abuse may be physical, emotional, or sexual.

School or lodge staff are required by law to report suspicions that a child might be in need of protection. Those who know or suspect that a child might be in need of protection but do not report it may be held in contravention of the *CFS Act (1999)*. This *Act* protects the identity of individuals reporting a child in need of protection.

In accordance with this *Act*, all school or lodge staff shall report any suspected abuse using the reporting procedures in the attached regulations. Furthermore all staff are directed to the "Child Protection and Child Abuse Manual: Protocols for School Division Staff (2003)", which provides excerpts from the *Act*, including legal definitions, role of agencies, and other vital information.

Copies of the "Child Protection and Child Abuse Manual: Protocols for School Staff (2003)" are available in each school or from Manitoba Education or Manitoba Family Services and Housing.

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