

GENEVA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 304

Office of Human Resources

Child Abuse/Neglect Identification & Reporting

1. The Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA) establishes the legal definitions, reporting requirements and investigatory procedures for the identification of child abuse and neglect in the State of Illinois.
2. According to ANCRA, professionals (e.g., doctors, dentists, nurses, police officers probation officers, day care workers, foster parents, members of the clergy) who may work with children in the course of their professional duties are considered **mandated reporters**. All school personnel are considered to be mandated reporters.
3. All mandated reporters in a school district shall complete the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services on-line training for Mandated Reporters once every five years. Following completion of the on-line training, a Certificate of Completion should be sent to the Office of Human Resources.
4. All mandated reporters in a school district have a legal responsibility to report (calling the DCFS Hotline at 1-800-252-2873 or 1-800-25ABUSE) to the Department of Children and Family Services when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be an abused or neglected child.
5. A mandated reporter who knowingly and willfully violates the reporting requirements is subject to criminal prosecution, license suspension or revocation and civil liability.
6. A mandated reporter is entitled to immunity for any report of child abuse or neglect under ANCRA as long as the report is made in good faith.
7. A mandated reporter should not notify the alleged perpetrator of the child abuse or neglect that a report has been made or that there is a pending investigation unless compelling reasons exist to do so.
8. It is not the responsibility of the mandated reporter to determine if child abuse or neglect has taken place. This is the responsibility of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The responsibility of the mandated reporter is to convey information to DCFS so that this agency can make a determination.
9. Per District 304 Board of Education Policy #8462, any school district employee who makes a report under ANCRA shall immediately notify the building principal, in person or by telephone, of such action. Other school district personnel (i.e., social worker, psychologist, school nurse, guidance counselor) may be notified that a report of suspected child abuse or neglect has been made under ANCRA.

10. The building principal/supervisor is prohibited from exercising any control, restraint, modification or other change in the abuse/neglect hotline phone call or the forwarding of the written report to DCFS.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

1. In DCFS abuse/neglect investigations, there is increasing scrutiny as to “when” a mandated reporter files a child abuse/neglect report. The focus is not only on “what do you know” but “when did you suspect that abuse/neglect was taking place.” This is especially the case for building principals and or school personnel who serve in a supervisory capacity.
2. When in doubt, report. If it is far better to make one too many calls than one too few. As long as you are acting in good faith, you have immunity from prosecution. Let the DCFS hotline worker determine whether or not to accept your report.
3. While it is important to maintain confidentiality in matters related to making a DSFS abuse/neglect report, school staff are encouraged to share what they have seen and/or heard with the appropriate student services personnel (i.e., social worker, psychologist, school nurse, guidance counselor) before, during and after the hotline phone call is made and the written report is forwarded to DCFS.
4. The reporting standard “reasonable cause to suspect” is not a high standard. Generally, you will be much better off to report than not to report.
5. In general, school districts are being discouraged from conducting their own internal investigations when a child abuse case involves a school employee. When a building administrator suspects that abuse/neglect might be occurring involving a student and a school employee, the building administrator is expected to contact the Kane County Children’s Advocacy Center, the Kane County State’s Attorney’s Office and the local police department.