

Child/Dependent Adult Abuse Reporting

In compliance with state law and to provide protection to victims of child/dependent adult abuse, incidents of alleged child/dependent adult abuse must be reported to the proper authorities. Any licensed employee, certified para-educator, or holder of a coaching authorization, who within the scope of their professional duties has a reasonable belief that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, or a dependent adult 18 or over, as defined by law, by a person responsible for the care of that child/dependent adult, shall report the suspected abuse verbally to the Department of Human Services (DHS) within twenty-four hours. In addition, any licensed employee, certified para-educator, or holder of a coaching authorization, who has a reasonable belief that a child under the age of 12 has been sexually abused by anyone, or that a child under the age of 18 has been sexually abused by a caretaker or by a person over the age of 14 who resides in the home with the child, or that a dependent adult has been sexually exploited by a caretaker, shall contact the Department of Human Services and report that suspicion as well. If the child is aged 12 or older (unless defined as a dependent adult), you may report the sexual abuse by a non-caretaker, but you are not required by law to do so. If the mandatory reporter believes the child/dependent adult is in immediate danger, 911 will be called. The reporting of suspected abuse by non-licensed employees is encouraged.

School administration and staff will cooperate fully with DHS Child Protection Workers in conducting a child abuse/dependent adult investigation by providing confidential access to the child/dependent adult named in the report, and to other children alleged to have relevant information, for the purpose of interviews. There is no legal obligation by school staff to contact the parents or guardians of a child/dependent adult suspected to have been abused.

Within one month of initial employment, the District will provide each new employee who is a mandatory reporter with the legal requirements of child abuse/dependent adult reporting. Within six months of their initial employment, mandatory reporters will complete a two-hour training course involving the identification and reporting of child/dependent adult abuse. Every 3 years, mandatory reporters will complete 1-hour child/dependent adult abuse recertification training, if they have previously completed the full 2-hour training curriculum (after July 1, 2019) provided by DHS and whose certification has not expired.

Legal References: Iowa Code §§ 232, 235A, 235B

- 232.68 - A licensed school employee, certified paraeducator, or holder of a coaching authorization issued under Section 272.31 Code of Iowa is designated as a mandatory reporter.
- 232.75 & 235B.3 -The obligation to report is not discretionary. Knowing and willful failure to report or interfere with making a report may result in a simple misdemeanor and civil liability for damages.
- 232.73 - Persons who make reports in good faith shall have immunity for civil or criminal liability.
- 232.71B(7) – Facility or school visit. The assessment may include a visit to a facility providing care to the child named in the report or to any public or private school subject to the authority of the department of education where the child named in the report is located. The administrator of a facility, or a public or private school shall cooperate with the child protection worker by providing confidential access to the child named in the report for the purpose of interviewing the child and shall allow the child protection worker confidential access to other children for the purpose of conducting interviews in order to obtain relevant information. The child protection worker may observe (direct physical viewing) a child. A witness shall be present during an observation of a child. Any child aged ten years of age or older can terminate contact with the child protection worker by stating or indicating the child’s wish to discontinue the contact.

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