

## 402.2 CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

In compliance with state law and to provide protection to victims of child abuse, the board believes incidents of alleged child abuse should be reported to the proper authorities. All licensed school employees, teachers, coaches and paraeducators are mandatory reporters as provided by law and are to report alleged incidents of child abuse they become aware of within the scope of their professional duties.

When a mandatory reporter suspects a student is the victim of child abuse, the mandatory reporter shall make an oral report of the suspected child abuse to the Iowa Department of Human Services within 24 hours of becoming aware of the abusive incident and shall make a written report to the Iowa Department of Human Services within 48 hours following the oral report. If the mandatory reporter believes the child is in immediate danger, the local law enforcement agency will also be notified.

Within six months of their initial employment, mandatory reporters will take a two-hour training course involving the identification and reporting of child abuse, or submit evidence they've taken the course within the previous three years. After July 1, 2019, employees who have previously taken mandatory reporter training will be required to take the two-hour training course before the expiration of their current training certificate. Once the training course has been taken, the certificate will remain valid for three years. Employees who have taken the post-July 1, 2019 two-hour training course will take the one-hour follow up training course every three years and prior to the expiration of their certificate.

*For more information, please visit the "Report Abuse and Fraud" section of the Iowa Department of Human Services' website, located at <http://dhs.iowa.gov/report-abuse-and-fraud>.*

*Please remember there are two types of reporters identified in Iowa law: mandatory reporters and permissive reporters. Mandatory reporters are those individuals who are required by law to report suspected incidents of child abuse when they become aware of such incidents within the scope of their employment or professional responsibilities. Permissive reporters are not required by law to report abuse, but may choose to report to the Iowa Department of Human Services. While all licensed school employees, teachers, coaches and paraeducators are mandatory reporters within the scope of their profession, they are considered permissive reporters outside the scope of their profession.*

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 232.67-.77; 232A; 235A; 280.17 .  
441 I.A.C. 9.2; 155; 175.

Cross Reference: 402.3 Abuse of Students by School District Employees  
502.9 Interviews of Students by Outside Agencies  
507 Student Health and Well-Being

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## 402.2R1 CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REGULATION

Iowa law requires all licensed school employees, teachers, coaches and paraeducators to report to the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) instances of suspected child abuse which they become aware of within the scope of their professional practice.

The law further specifies that a licensed employee who knowingly or willfully fails to report a suspected case of child abuse is guilty of a simple misdemeanor and that the licensed employee may be subject to civil liability for damages caused by the failure to report.

Employees participating in good faith in the making of a report or in a judicial proceeding that may result from the report are immune from liability.

### Child Abuse Defined

"Child abuse" is defined as:

Any non-accidental physical injury, or injury which is at variance with the history given of it, suffered by a child as the result of the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of the child.

The commission of a sexual offense with or to a child ... as a result of the acts or omissions of the person responsible for the child ... Sexual offense includes sexual abuse, incest, and sexual exploitation of a minor.

The failure on the part of a person responsible for the care of a child to provide for the adequate food, shelter, clothing or other care necessary for the child's welfare when financially able to do so. A parent or guardian legitimately practicing religious beliefs who does not provide specified medical treatment for a child for that reason alone shall not be considered abusing the child.

The acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of a child which allow, permit or encourage the child to engage in acts prohibited pursuant to Iowa Code, section 725.1 which deals with prostitution.

Teachers in public schools are not "persons responsible for the care of the child" under this definition. However, a teacher who abuses a child is subject to civil, criminal, and professional sanctions.

### Reporting Procedures

All licensed school employees, teachers, coaches, paraeducators and school nurses, are required to report, either orally or in writing, within twenty-four (24) hours to the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) when the employee reasonably believes a child has suffered from abuse within the scope of employment. Within forty-eight (48) hours of an oral report, a written report must be filed with DHS.

Each report should contain as much of the following information as can be obtained within the time limit. However, the law specifies that a report will be considered valid even if it does not contain all of the following information:

- name, age, and home address of the child;
- name and home address of the parents, guardians or other persons believed to be responsible for the care of the child;
- the child's present whereabouts if not the same as the parent's or other person's home address;
- description of injuries, including evidence of previous injuries;
- name, age, and condition of other children in the same home;
- any other information considered helpful; and,
- name and address of the person making the report.

Board policy states that it is not the responsibility of employees to prove that a child has been abused or neglected. Employees should not take it upon themselves to investigate the case or contact the family of the child. The DHS is responsible for investigating the incident of alleged abuse.