

Mandatory Reporting Requirements School Volunteers

The Douglas County Board of Education recognizes the fact that abused or neglected children are less able to regularly attend school and perform to their maximum potential than are other children. In recognition of the legal mandate which requires individuals who are employed or who **volunteer** in schools in Georgia to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities, all school employees and **volunteers** are advised as follows:

Any person who has reason to believe that a child has had physical injury or injuries, other than by accidental means, by a parent, or a caretaker, or has been neglected or exploited by a parent or caretaker, or has been sexually assaulted, must report or cause a report to be made with immunity from liability in accordance with the provisions of Georgia Code, Section 19-7-5 and the child abuse protocol for Douglas County.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

- Any school employee or **volunteer** having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made to the school principal.
- If the school principal is not available, a report shall be made to the school assistant principal or school counselor.
- An oral report of suspected child abuse shall be made immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused.
- In any instance where a report to school personnel within 24 hours is not possible, a report shall be made to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Services, or in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.
- Any school employee or **volunteer** who reports or causes a report to be made shall in so doing be immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed, provided such reports are made in good faith.
- Under no circumstances may the principal or designee to whom a notification of child abuse has been made "exercise any control, restraint, modification or make other change to the information provided by the reporter, although each of the aforementioned persons (mandated reporters) may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide additional, relevant, and necessary information when making the report".
- Any school system employee or volunteer having reasonable cause to believe that a student has been abused by another school system employee shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made to the appropriate agency in accordance with the procedure above.

Definitions:

- "Abused" means subjected to child abuse.
- "Child" means any person under 18 years of age.
- "Child Abuse" means:
 - Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker thereof by other than accidental means; provided, however, physical forms of discipline may be used as long as there is no physical injury to the child;
 - Neglect or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker thereof;
 - Sexual abuse or unwelcome touching of a child; or
 - Sexual exploitation of a child.
 - NOTE: No child who in good faith is being treated solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination by a duly accredited practitioner thereof shall, for that reason alone, be considered to be an "abused" child.

I have read and understood the legal mandatory reporting requirements for individuals who volunteer with the Douglas County School System.

Signature: _____ Date: _____