

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Best Practices

If a student reports they are being abused or neglected, or someone is suspicious of abuse or neglect:



You must promptly report this to your state's child abuse hotline.

Most state laws require that **every person** having reason to believe that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect shall promptly report the matter to the child abuse hotline.

- This **does not** equate to solely reporting this to the principal or someone else in the chain of command at the school.
- **Counselors should be available to sit in** with the other person while the report to the child abuse hotline is made.
- The [Child Abuse Reporting Form](#) should be completed. The report should **NEVER** go into the cumulative folder, but a private file in the counselor's office. A copy may also be sent to the district office to be kept in a private file.



If a child abuse official from the state and/or the police come to the school to interview the child, **a school official MAY sit in the interview** with the student's permission. However, anyone who sits in while a student reports abuse to police or a child abuse worker may be called to testify in court.

- If a child abuse worker and/or police come to the school to interview a child or investigate abuse, a [Child Abuse Investigation Form](#) should be completed. The report should **NEVER** go into the cumulative folder, but a private file in the counselor's office. A copy may also be sent to the district office to be kept in a private file.



If the student **needs medical attention**, they should be referred to the nurse and/or emergency medical responders immediately.



Police should be contacted any time a Child Abuse Report is made.

This could include informing the on-site School Resource Officer. Consider giving police a copy of the child abuse reporting form you filled out. Some states require police to be called when reporting child abuse.



If you are questioning whether you should contact DHS about a situation, the answer is almost always, **YES YOU SHOULD**. Remember that **a school official's job is to report information, not to investigate.**

That job is for the police and child abuse workers.



Even if you have made a **previous report** about a student, it is almost always appropriate to **file another report**. When you file the report, you can refer to the case numbers from the former reports. However, filing a new report is important in order to continue to "build a case" for the state to investigate.



If a parent/guardian or someone else close to a child confronts you on why you called child protective services, **best practice is to NOT talk to them about this**. You can say, "We do not discuss things like this in our district. If you have questions, you can contact (the appropriate district-level administrator)."



All documentation for a report should be turned in to a district-level administrator **within 24 hours** so they have it on file.



A **district-level administrator should be notified** as soon as possible, even before the paperwork is turned in.