

Georgia law requires school system employees and volunteers who have reasonable cause to suspect a child is abused or neglected to report this to the proper authority. System employees and volunteers should understand that their obligation is to report the suspicion or allegation, not to investigate or decide the validity of the suspicion or allegation. Anyone making such a report in good faith is entitled to immunity, provided that the person making the report is not responsible for the abuse. Any person required to report a suspected case who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and conviction thereof shall be punished for a misdemeanor.

Procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect are as follows:

School personnel and volunteers are not to do any extensive questioning of or obtain written statements from elementary students. Any questioning of young children should be limited to what is needed to gain information for reporting, as required by the statute, such as the nature and extent of the child's injuries, including any evidence of previous injuries, and any other information that the reporting person believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries and the identity of the perpetrator.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect from Home

Any staff member or volunteer suspecting child abuse or neglect is to report to his or her principal/department head or his/her designee the suspicion immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe the child has been abused. The principal/department head is required to report the incident immediately to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) using the CCSD Child Abuse/Neglect Referral Form. After verbally notifying DFCS, the principal or department head is to forward promptly a written referral to DFCS and the school social worker. When a child is suspected to be in imminent danger, the principal/department head or his/her designee they should also report the incident to the appropriate law enforcement agency. If a school official reports a case to DFACS more than once for suspected child abuse, a report should also be made to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Suspected Child Abuse by a School District Employee

Upon receiving information that a staff member is suspected or accused of child abuse or neglect, the principal or department head should question the employee regarding the suspicion or allegation (if any). If after initial inquiry, talking with any witnesses, and consulting with the Superintendent or designee, there is reasonable cause to suspect that a crime may have been committed, the principal or department head should notify the appropriate legal authority, the Human Resource Department, and the Superintendent's Office immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe the child has been abused. Following verbal notification, a written report is to be made to the Superintendent.

Suspected Child Abuse by another Child

Any complaint of inappropriate physical contact made by an elementary student against another student should not automatically be considered or assumed to be a crime. With the exception of

incidents of statutory rape or aggravated sexual assault as defined in the Columbia County Student Code of Conduct, elementary student actions should be handled as disciplinary infractions and the incidents should be reported to the Superintendent or designee and the children's parents. Such a report should be made immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe the child has been abused.

Any complaint of inappropriate physical contact made by a middle or high student against another student should be investigated, reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency, and acted upon in accordance with the Columbia County Student Code of Conduct.

The Columbia County School District superintendent is to be notified promptly of all cases of alleged child abuse or neglect when the alleged perpetrator is a CCBOE employee, the alleged abuse occurred on CCBOE property, or the local law enforcement is involved in the investigation.

When an official of either DFCS or the local law enforcement agency desires to speak with a student to investigate a complaint of abuse or neglect, the principal or his/her designee is to view proper identification of the official, to introduce the child to the investigator, and to remain present with the child throughout the meeting; however, the principal or designee should not be a participant in the discussion. With the exception of students who are in the physical or legal custody of DHS, written permission of the child's parent or guardian is required for school officials to allow the child to meet alone with other agency officials. Photographs of the child's injuries to be used as documentation in support of allegations may be taken pursuant to state law, (Code Section 19-7-5 G), and, if reasonably possible, should be taken in a manner which shall not reveal the identity of the child. Parental notification should be coordinated between school officials and the other agencies involved depending upon the circumstances unique to each investigation.

All school personnel and volunteers who have contact with students are to receive training in identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. Annual updates on the identification and reporting of child abuse or neglect are provided to all veteran employees. – Standard G11.2; Authority O.C.G.A. 19-7-5; GBOE Rule 160-4-8-.04 (JGI)

It is the responsibility of each principal and/or department head to ensure that all employees and volunteers under their supervision receive an in-service regarding the identifying and reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect cases. During pre-planning a Columbia County School District social worker will provide this training for all new to the system school personnel and volunteers. Following pre-planning, the principal or department head is responsible for providing training to any new employees or volunteers. Further, it is the responsibility of each principal and department head to provide an annual update on the identification and reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect to all veteran employees and volunteers. A *Required Annual Training and Update Assurances Form* (form 2 attached) will be utilized at each in-service to verify that the school has recorded the name, position, and school or site of each employee in attendance. These attendance rosters are to be kept on file by the school and the system social worker.

To Make a Report:

- By Phone: 1-855-GA-CHILD (1-855-422-4453). If you believe the child is in immediate danger, call 911.
 - Electronically: Mandated reporters can complete the Georgia Mandated Reporter Form online at <https://cps.dhs.ga.gov>. A private code that identifies the job or profession of the reporter is required to access the form. A list of access codes may be obtained at [Electronic Georgia Mandated Reporter Form Access Codes](#).
 - By Email or Fax: Reporters who wish to report either by email cpsintake@dhr.state.ga.us or by fax (229-317-9663) should use the following link: [Georgia Mandated Reporter Form](#)

ADOPTED:

REVISED: 8/13/02, 9/7/04, 8/13/02, 3/7/05, 10/11/05, 11/22/05, 6/21/06, 9/25/06, 4/14/08, 8/11/08, 8/20/12, 10/8/12, 10/15/12, 9/19/16, 7/24/17

Columbia County Board of Education

Form 1 - Procedure JGI

PERMISSION TO GAIN/SHARE INFORMATION

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been informed by School Officials that my child has expressed thoughts of suicide or has threatened suicide or physical harm to himself/herself.

Accordingly, I understand that the Columbia County School District is concerned for the health and safety of my child and is required by policy to request that I, as the parent or guardian of such child, seek immediate help for my child from a physician, appropriate health care provider or appropriate governmental agency. I agree to seek such help immediately. I further understand the Columbia County School District may contact such physician, health care provider or governmental agency to confirm the treatment or advice given and to follow up as appropriate for my child.

In this connection, I give my permission for the exchange of confidential information contained in the school, health or medical records of my child with his/her physician, appropriate health care provider(s) and/or governmental agency(s), and the Columbia County School District.

I further grant to the Columbia County School District permission to follow through and implement any recommendation or action that may be indicated by an order of the treating physician, appropriate health care provider or governmental agency, recognizing the order must be in writing and received by the School District before it can be implemented.

Signed this ___ day of _____, 20 ____

CHILD'S NAME

NAME OF PHYSICIAN/APPROPRIATE HEALTHCARE
PROVIDER AND/OR GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME



Columbia County School District
Required Annual Training and Updates Assurances Form

Please check all sessions that have been offered for the current school term:

- Child Abuse Training and Updates
- McKinney-Vento Training and Updates
- Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training and Updates
- Fraud, Waste, Abuse and Corruption and Code of Ethics Training and Updates
- Safety Training and Updates
- Internet Responsible Use (Procedure IFBGA 3)

This Assurance Form Must Be:

- Completed only after verifying that all employees at your location or in your department have completed the required training and/or updates.
- Signed and return to your assigned evaluator.

I, (Full Name), have verified that all employees of (School or Department Name) have completed all training and/or updates. I understand my responsibilities to ensure that all employees are trained as a mandatory reporter and know the process for reporting suspected child abuse.

Signature

Title

Date