

Oak Ridge Schools

Office of the Superintendent



Administrative Procedure 6.409

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse,

Brutality, or Neglect

February 15, 2017

Introduction

Pursuant to Tennessee State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-03-.08(2)(e) and Oak Ridge Schools Board Policy No. 6.409, the Oak Ridge Schools has developed reporting procedures for its school personnel and contractors. Nothing in this procedure shall alter, amend, or eliminate any person's responsibility to report any instance of known or suspected child abuse in accordance with Tennessee law.

General Information About Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting

Oak Ridge Schools is committed to providing a safe environment for all of its students. All employees of the Oak Ridge School System and all employees of contractors providing services to our schools are required to complete Mandated Reporter Training on an annual basis.

All personnel working in the Oak Ridge Schools are required by both Tennessee law and Oak Ridge Schools' employment policy to immediately report any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition in any child that reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect.

Any Oak Ridge School employee or contractor having knowledge or suspicion of any child who is suffering from any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition that reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect must report such harm immediately to one of the following persons who have been identified by law to receive such reports: the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, the Oak Ridge Chief of Police or the Anderson County Sheriff, or the Juvenile Judge for Anderson County, Tennessee.

If you have such knowledge or suspicion involving a child, you are now a mandated child abuse reporter under Tennessee law and Board Policy. As a legally mandated child abuse reporter, you are **not** to engage in preliminary personal investigations involving the information you have, or in legal research, nor are you allowed to substitute your own personal judgment or beliefs for the judgment of the expert agencies identified by law to receive your report.

Failure to report known or suspected child abuse is a violation of Tennessee law and a crime (i.e. a Class A Misdemeanor) and may also result in your termination as an employee or contractor for the Oak Ridge Schools.

Persons who "act in good faith" and properly report known or suspected child abuse may do so confidentially and anonymously. In addition, by law, mandatory reporters become immune from any civil or criminal charges when they report.

What does child abuse, brutality or neglect look like?

Child abuse, brutality, and neglect may manifest itself in many different ways. Below is a list of indicators of child abuse, brutality, and neglect. This list is not exhaustive. Indicators of child abuse, brutality, and neglect include, **but are not limited**, to:

- The child has repeated injuries that are not properly treated or adequately explained.

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- *The child begins acting in unusual ways ranging from disruptive and aggressive to passive and withdrawn.*
- *The child acts as a parent toward his or her brothers and sisters or even toward their own parents.*
- *The child may have disturbed sleep (nightmares, bed-wetting, fear of sleeping alone, and needing nightlight).*
- *The child loses his/her appetite, overeats or may report being hungry.*
- *There is a sudden drop in school grades or participation in activities.*
- *The child may act in ways that are developmentally inappropriate, such as sexual behavior that is not normal for his/her age group.*
- *The child may report abusive or neglectful acts.*

Mandatory Reporting Procedures

How to Report

The following reporting procedures are internal procedures to be followed by all Oak Ridge Schools' personnel and contractors. Nothing in this section shall alter, amend, or eliminate an individual's responsibility to report any instance of known or suspected child abuse in accordance with Tennessee law.

In the case of an Emergency or a Life-Threatening Situation Call 911 first and then follow the steps listed below.

Otherwise follow these Steps:

- **Step One** – ***IMMEDIATELY*** report any case of known or suspected child abuse, brutality, or neglect to one of the following agencies:
 - ***Preferred:*** *The Tennessee Department of Children's Services' Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004; or*
 - *The Oak Ridge Police Department at 865-425-3504; or*
 - *The Anderson County Sheriff's Department at 865-463-6880; or*
 - *The Juvenile Court Judge for Anderson County, Tennessee at 865-259-2351.*
- **Step Two** – Document your report by writing down the following information:
 - *The child's name;*
 - *The date and time you made your report;*
 - *The name of the agency to which you made your report;*
 - *Any applicable case number issued to you by the agency; and*
 - *A summary of the incident or the concern you reported.*

- **Step Three** – *Immediately after completing Step One, above, also inform either your building’s Principal or the Oak Ridge Schools’ Superintendent’s Office of your report and provide those offices with all of the associated details listed in Step Two, above.*