

Consistent with Georgia law, the Columbia County School System Student Welfare-Child Abuse Policy seeks to provide for the protection of children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected and further threatened by the conduct of those responsible for their care and protection at home or by any individual at school or a school function. It is intended that the mandatory reporting of such cases will cause protective services of the state to be brought to bear on the situation in an effort to prevent further abuse and to protect and enhance the welfare of children.

School officials, having reasonable cause to suspect that children under 18 years of age and within their care have been abused by a parent or caretaker, are required to report the incident to the Department of Family and Children Services. Anyone making such a report in good faith is entitled to immunity. Abuse includes physical injuries, neglect, exploitation and any form of sexual misconduct.

School officials, having reasonable cause to suspect that students within their care have been abused by a school system employee or another student, are required to report the incident to the appropriate legal authority. Anyone making such report in good faith is entitled to immunity. Abuse includes physical injuries and any form of sexual misconduct.

Any school official suspecting child abuse or neglect is to report the suspicion to the appropriate authority immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe the child has been abused. Under no circumstances may the school official to whom a notification of child abuse has been made exercise any control, restraint, modification or make other changes to the information provided by the reporter, although a reporter may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide any additional, relevant, and necessary information needed to make the report.

PROCEDURE: YES

ADOPTED: 9/8/87

REVISED: 10/1/97, 8/10/99, 8/13/02, 10/11/05