



Reporting Misconduct – Policies and Procedures

All SURGE Christian Academy instructional personnel, administrators, and support staff have an obligation/duty to students, society and the institution to report alleged instructional personnel, administrators, and support staff misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors.

1. The procedure for reporting employee or administrator misconduct is:
 - a. Contact the school's principals (in writing) of the specific nature of the alleged misconduct including information on the employee(s) involved, witness(es), and victim(s).
 - b. Retain a copy of the written allegation (which has been signed by the administrator) so that there is a written record of the date and time the report was made.
 - c. Using the Office of Professional Practices Educator Misconduct Form, the school will contact the Florida Department of Education, Office of Professional Practices Services, for all legally sufficient allegations within 30 days.
 - d. If the school has not filed an Educator Misconduct Form for an allegation you feel should have been reported, you are ethically obligated to report the incident directly.

2. **There are employee liability protections** provided under FL Statutes 39.203 and 768.095 that apply to all employees who report alleged employee or administrator misconduct. An employee cannot and will not be terminated or held liable for any suspected misconduct that they report. SURGE Christian Academy staff has an ethical obligation to the students in our program. That ethical obligation requires that staff:
 - a. Shall make a reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.
 - b. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
 - c. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
 - d. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
 - e. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
 - f. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
 - g. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
 - h. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
 - i. Shall keep in confidence personal identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

SURGE Christian Academy prohibits confidentiality agreements with instructional personnel or school administrators who are dismissed, terminated, or resign in lieu of termination due to misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student, and any reference provided to a potential employer in an educational setting will disclose the misconduct.

Reporting Child Abuse

Unfortunately, child abuse, neglect and abandonment are all too frequent occurrences in today's society. In our capacities as educators or employees at an educational institution, at some point in our careers we are likely to come into contact with child abuse, neglect or abandonment. This prompts the question, "how do I recognize and deal with such a situation when it occurs?"

This policy is designed to provide guidelines for reporting suspected child abuse, neglect, and abandonment.

Florida Statutes require that all school personnel report situations involving potential child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

The statute contains these definitions:

"Abuse": any willful act or threatened act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual injury or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired.

"Neglect": when a child is deprived of, or is allowed to be deprived of, necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment or a child is permitted to live in an environment when such deprivation or environment causes the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired to be in danger of being significantly impaired.

"Abandonment": a situation in which the parent or legal custodian of a child, or in the absence of a parent or legal custodian, the caregiver responsible for the child's welfare, while being able, makes no provision for the child's support and makes no effort to communicate with the child, which situations is sufficient to evince a willful rejection of parental obligations.

Signs of Physical Abuse:

The child may have unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, or other injuries; broken bones; or burns. A child experiencing physical abuse may seem withdrawn or depressed, seem afraid to go home or may run away, shy away from physical contact, be aggressive, or wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries. Signs of Sexual Abuse The child may have torn, stained or bloody underwear, trouble walking or sitting, pain or itching in genital area, or a sexually transmitted disease. A child experiencing sexual abuse may have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively, fear a particular person, seem withdrawn or depressed, gain or lose weight suddenly, shy away from physical contact, or run away from home. Signs of Neglect The child may have unattended medical needs, little or no supervision at home, poor hygiene, or appear underweight. A child experiencing neglect may be frequently tired or hungry, steal food, or appear overly needy for adult attention. Patterns of Abuse Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

If you have a belief, concern, or thought that you have witnessed, heard, or heard about a situation possible involving abuse, neglect, or abandonment, you must do the following:

- Florida Law and School Board Policy require the reporting of all instances of suspected child abuse, molestation, and child neglect by the person **who first suspects the abuse or by the person who the child told first.**
- Report any case of child abuse to the administrators.
- There is a list of phone numbers at the end of this manual. The emergency/abuse hotline number is included on that list.

All teachers **MUST** take the Child Abuse course provided by SURGE Christian Academy.

SURGE Christian Academy Employees are MANDATORY reporters of suspected child abuse, neglect and abandonment, and have an obligation and an affirmative duty to students and families to report all actual or any suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

Immediately, Please Call the ABUSE HOTLINE at: 1-800-96-ABUSE or report online at:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>

Liability Protections

Any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in any act authorized or required by law, or reporting in good faith any instance of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the department or any law enforcement agency, shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise result by reason of such action. (F.S. 39.203).

An employer who discloses information about a former or current employee to a prospective employer of the former or current employee upon request of the prospective employer or of the former or current employee is immune from civil liability for such disclosure or its consequences unless it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that the information disclosed by the former or current employer was knowingly false or violated any civil right of the former or current employee protected under F.S. Chapter 760. (F.S. 768.095)