

CCS Administrative Procedure

2.30.05-C Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

Implementing Board Policy [2.05.05](#)

Contact: Chief Administration Officer, 434-5037

1.0 Purpose

Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS), committed to the health and safety of its faculty, staff and students, shall maintain a safe and efficient workplace that complies with all local, state and federal safety and health regulations, programmatic standards, and with any special safety concerns identified at the unit level. Every person in the organization is assigned responsibility for both individual and organizational safety.

Further, CCS, aware of its obligations as an institution of higher education and steward of the public trust, will ensure that suspected instances of child abuse and/or neglect occurring or becoming known within our institution are reported to the appropriate authorities, in compliance with federal, state and local laws and statutes. This procedure provides guidance and direction related to the reporting of suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

2.0 Limitations and Requirements

The mandatory child abuse reporting requirements of RCW 26.44.030 apply to specified employees of institutions of higher education, including academic, administration and athletics personnel. Section 2 of RCW 28B.10 requires all employees of institutions of higher education to immediately report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to an appropriate administrator and places an obligation on CCS to develop a systemic reporting process. In general:

- 2.1 The overall objective of this procedure is to provide a safe working and learning environment which protects children from suspected abuse/neglect, supports faculty, staff, and students and ensures compliance with reporting requirements.
- 2.2 A systemic process by which suspicions are reported, information gathered, and responsible agencies informed will be provided and communicated.
- 2.3 Failure to follow safety and health guidelines or any conduct that places the employee, other employees, students or members of the public – including children – at risk may be cause for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or student expulsion.
- 2.4 The Chief Student Services Officers of each college, together with the Chief Administration Officer, are responsible for maintaining, periodically reviewing, and analyzing these and other relevant procedures and, further, for informing and training faculty, staff, and students about the procedure.

3.0 Definitions

The following definitions are specific to the terms of this procedure and do not modify or revise similar terms as used in related procedures or collective bargaining agreements. Note that Spokane County is referenced for general purposes, but where the service region is other than Spokane County that service region is the intended reference.

- 3.1 **Abuse and Neglect:** means sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or injury of a child by any person under circumstances which cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety, excluding conduct permitted under RCW 9A.16.100 (reasonable and moderate discipline); or negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to a child.
- 3.2 **Chief Student Services Officer:** The person designated by the College President to be responsible for the administration of student support services.

- 3.3 Child: means any person under the age of eighteen years of age.
- 3.4 City of Spokane Police Department: A law enforcement agency authorized to take and investigate reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect.
- 3.5 College: For the purposes of this document, "college" is defined as any instructional unit of Community Colleges of Spokane.
- 3.6 College Security Director: the person designated by the Chief Administration Officer to be responsible for security on the campus.
- 3.7 Mandatory Reporter: faculty/staff who have statutory responsibility to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to either law enforcement or DSHS-CPS, including all faculty, administrators, and athletics department staff (including work study students in those departments).
- 3.8 Reasonable Suspicion/Cause: a legal standard of proof in United States law that is less than probable cause, but more than an unsupportable suspicion or "hunch." It must be based on specific and articulable facts taken together with rational inferences from those facts. Reasonable suspicion is evaluated using the "reasonable person" standard, in which said person in the same circumstances could reasonably believe a child has been abused or neglected.
- 3.9 Spokane County Sheriff's Office: A law enforcement agency authorized to take and investigate reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect.
- 3.10 Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS-CPS): The state agency responsible for taking and investigating reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect, and with enforcement of RCW 26.44.

4.0 Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect

- 4.1 Mandatory reporters are legally required to make reports of suspected child abuse/neglect directly to law enforcement or the DSHS-CPS. CCS has assigned each chief student services officer to serve as a trained resource available to mandatory reporters, able to assist with assessment of suspicions, gather pertinent facts, and provide subject matter expertise in the reporting process.

Mandatory reporters are encouraged, but not required to consult with the chief student services officer as the first step in the reporting process. General staff shall contact the chief student services officer as the first step.

- 4.2 Mandatory reporters for CCS include all:
- 4.2.1 Faculty, both adjunct and annually contracted, including counselors and librarians.
 - 4.2.2 District administrators including deans, district directors, vice presidents, presidents, management services officers and the Chancellor.
 - 4.2.3 Faculty, staff, administrators assigned to the district athletics department, and
 - 4.2.4 Work study students of those respective functional areas/departments.

- 4.3 When a mandatory reporter has reasonable cause to believe a child has suffered abuse or neglect, he or she shall immediately report such incident or cause a report to be made.
- 4.3.1 The mandatory reporter is authorized to report directly to law enforcement or DSHS-CPS.
- 4.3.2 In the alternative, the mandatory reporter can immediately make a report to the applicable chief student services officer of his/her unit.
- 4.3.3 The chief student services officer, in consultation with the applicable campus security director, will gather pertinent information from the mandatory reporter to include, but not limited to:
- 4.3.3.1 Name of the mandatory reporter.
- 4.3.3.2 Name, address and age of the child and names of the child's guardians/parents.
- 4.3.3.3 Name of the suspected abuser, if known.
- 4.3.3.4 Nature and extent of alleged abuse and neglect, and
- 4.3.3.5 Other issues that may impact the child's safety (i.e., presence of other children, mental health or substance abuse issues in the home).
- 4.3.4 The chief student services officer, campus security supervisor and, if possible, the mandatory reporter will next contact law enforcement.
- 4.3.5 If the mandatory reporter disagrees with the assessment of the chief student services officer he/she has the greater right to report the suspected abuse/neglect personally to law enforcement or DSHS-CPS and can do so without fear of employer retaliation or reprimand.
- 4.4 The report to law enforcement/DSHS-CPS must be made at the first opportunity, but in no case more than forty-eight hours after determining reasonable suspicion that child abuse/neglect has occurred.
- 4.5 The respective campus security director will consult and collaborate with any related law enforcement investigation.
- 4.6 Employees not designated as mandatory reporters per section 4.2, above, are still required, as employees of an institution of higher education, to immediately report suspicion of child abuse/neglect. Where an employee has reasonable cause to believe a child has suffered abuse or neglect, he/she will immediately report such abuse or neglect to the chief student services officer or, for district administration employees, the chief administrator officer.

5.0 Related Information

- 5.1 [Appendix A](#) – Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect Pertinent Information Checklist
- 5.2 [RCW 26.44.030](#) – Reports – duty and authority to make...
- 5.3 [RCW 28B.10.846](#) – Report of child abuse or neglect – reporting responsibilities.

Appendix A

**Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect
Pertinent Information Checklist**

Document as much of the following information as possible and then call your vice president for student services or the chief administration officer to discuss potential reporting requirements.

Your Name: _____

The name and address of the child in question: _____

Child's age, if known, or your estimate of age: _____

The name of child's parent/guardian: _____

Name of any family members: _____

Are there other children in the home/environment where the suspected abuse/neglect occurred?

- Yes No

Nature and extent of alleged abuse or neglect (what do you suspect has occurred)? _____

Are you aware of any previous incidents of abuse or neglect involving either this child or another child in the home/environment? _____

If known, race of those involved: _____

Anything else known about the child's environment, like mental health or substance abuse issues in the home: _____
