



CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT REPORTING POLICY

Policy Type:	STUDENTS: 520	Initially Approved:	May 2017
Last Revised:	December 2022	Review Scheduled:	December 2025

A. RATIONALE

This document underscores the importance of a collaborative approach between independent school authorities and personnel, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and the police to respond effectively to incidents of suspected child abuse and neglect and to ensure that children are protected.

Meadow Montessori School is committed to the prevention of child abuse and the enhancement of the well-being and safety of the students entrusted to its care. This commitment is made first and foremost as an ethical and legal responsibility but is also recognized as a response to government and societal expectations for the well-being and safety of students. The primary responsibility rests with parents. When parents are unwilling or unable to care for a child or youth – or to protect the child or youth from harm – the Ministry of Children and Family Development is legally authorized to intervene.

The purpose of this policy is to provide specific guidance to the employees of Meadow Montessori School in fulfilling the commitment to assist in child abuse prevention and in providing reporting protocols if child abuse is suspected or known to have occurred.

B. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all School employees, volunteers, and contractors.

C. POLICY STATEMENT

Congruent with the Child, Family and Community Service Act (section 13) all School employees, volunteers and contractors who have a reason to believe that a child or youth needs protection from abuse or neglect must report the matter to a child welfare worker with the Ministry of Child and Family Development or to

a Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agency. If a child is in immediate danger, School employees, volunteers and contractors must call 911 or the local police.

Any School employee, volunteer, and contractor suspected of child abuse or neglect will be suspended from their duties until an investigation has occurred. Anyone found guilty of abuse will be permanently removed from their position.

If a report of abuse is about School teacher or administrator, the Executive Director or President of the Board must also file a written and signed report about the allegation against the teacher or administrator to the B.C. Teacher Regulation Branch.

D. DEFINITIONS

Alternate Appointed School Official (AASO)	Means a person designated by the School to take responsibility for child abuse or neglect cases on behalf of the school if the ASO is not available or is the subject of the allegation.
Appointed School Official (ASO)	Means a person designated by the School to take responsibility for child abuse or neglect cases on behalf of the school.
Child	Any person under the age of 19 in British Columbia. (<i>See Child, Family and Community Services Act (CFSA).</i>)
Child Welfare Worker	A person delegated under the <i>Child, Family and Community Services Act (CFSA)</i> to provide child welfare services, including responses to suspected child abuse or neglect
Delegated Aboriginal and Family Services Agency	An organization that provides culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal children and families and whose child welfare workers have delegated authority under the <i>Child, Family and Community Services Act (CFSA)</i> to provide child welfare services, including responses to suspected child abuse or neglect.
Policy:	Means the Child Abuse & Reporting Policy
School:	Means Meadow Montessori

E. PROTOCOLS/REGULATIONS

1. Appointed School Officials

- a.** Schools are required to nominate at least two “Appointed School Officials,” a primary (ASO) and an alternate (AASO).
- b.** Unless otherwise approved by the President of the Board of Directors, these shall be the Executive Director/Head of School (ASO) and Vice-Principal(AASO).
- c.** If the Executive Director is suspected of child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the President of the Board to ensure the continuity of the reporting and investigation process on matters that fall under section 14 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)* by supporting the AASO.

2. Role of the Appointer School Official (ASO)

- a.** The role of the alternate appointed official is to ensure the continuity of the reporting and investigation process in the event of possible involvement of the primary appointed official in a matter that falls under section 14 of the CFCSA.
- b.** In fulfilling the role as a school’s Appointed School Official, a person may be required to:
 - i.** investigate where appropriate on behalf of the school authority;
 - ii.** ensure a safe school environment during investigations;
 - iii.** consult with the child welfare worker and/or police;
 - iv.** ensure that no school employee interferes with any investigations;
 - v.** communicate with parents with respect to actions taken by the school authority;
 - vi.** report to the Commission for Teacher Regulation, Teacher Regulation Branch, Ministry of Education, when the School Authority dismisses, suspends or otherwise disciplines a certified teacher or school principal (Independent School Act section 7 and 7.2); and,
 - vii.** refer student(s) for counseling according to the school’s policies.

3. Reporting on a Person Suspected of Child Abuse or Neglect

- a.** The *Child, Family and Community Services Act* requires that anyone who has reason to believe that a child or youth needs protection from abuse or neglect must promptly report the matter to a child welfare worker with the Ministry of Children and Family Development or to a Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agency;
- b.** Following a report to the child welfare worker, a School employee, volunteer or contractor must also inform the Appointed School Official for child abuse and neglect.
- c.** If the child is in immediate danger the person must first contact the police at 911 or your local police department.
- d.** The person will not contact the parents/guardians who may be involved in allegedly abusing the child; this is the responsibility of the child welfare worker.

- e. Parents must be informed by the Appointed School Official if a child is alleged to have been abused in the school setting.
 - f. If one is uncertain about their duty to report, they are to consult with a child welfare worker who can discuss the options and appropriate course of action.
- 4. Additional Reporting if the Allegation is against a School teacher or Administrator (Principal/ED)**
- a. If a report of abuse is about a School teacher or administrator, the Vice-Principal, Executive Director, or Board President must also file a written and signed report about the allegation against the teacher or administrator to the B.C. Teacher Regulation Branch.
- 5. Reporting to Police**
- a. Call 911 or your local police department when:
 - i. A child or youth under 19 years of age is in immediate danger, and/or
 - ii. A criminal offence against a child or youth has been or is likely to be committed.
 - b. Children and youth who are abused or neglected may be victims of criminal offences such as, but not limited to:
 - i. Criminal negligence causing bodily harm;
 - ii. Physical and sexual assault;
 - iii. Sexual interference or sexual invitation to touch a child under 14;
 - iv. Sexual exploitation of a child/youth; or
 - v. Failure to provide the necessities of life.
- 6. School Responsibilities**
- a. School personnel will cooperate fully with any resulting investigation.
 - b. The School will protect personal information regarding the investigation, including the reporter's identity, against improper or unauthorized disclosure or use.
 - c. School personnel will not share information with outside agencies about child abuse investigations, particularly if the police are involved.
 - d. The Appointed School Official will ensure that the school environment is safe during any investigation.
 - e. School personnel will support students who are victims of child abuse or neglect.
 - f. When an allegation has been made against an employee or contractor of the School, that individual will be suspended from working with children pending the result of the investigation. Anyone found guilty of abuse will be permanently removed from their position.
- 7. Relationships with Partner Agencies**
- a. School personnel will promote a working relationship with the local MCFD and Police on reporting suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect and will cooperate with these parties in their response to reports.

- b. The Principal will provide staff with the names and contact information with the local agencies that will provide assistance when dealing with child abuse and neglect. Contact information is provided in Appendix A.

8. Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

- a. Teachers will ensure the Physical Health and Education curriculum are taught each school year so as to provide students strategies to protect themselves and others from potential abuse, exploitation, and harm in a variety of settings.
- b. When there is reason to believe a child is in need of protection from any person the Principal has the authority to issue a “No Trespass Order” to any individual whose presence threatens the safety and welfare of students.

9. Personnel Training and Review

- a. The Principal will ensure that annual training is provided to all school personnel and volunteers who are working with children.
- b. Training will include recognizing child abuse or neglect, what actions are required, prevention measures, reporting child abuse or neglect and everyone’s legal responsibility if they suspect the abuse or neglect of a child. (See *B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect*).

10. Legal Duty to Report

- a. Section 14 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)* requires individuals to report promptly to a child welfare worker if they have reason to believe a child has been or is likely to be:
 - i. physically harmed, sexually abused or exploited, or neglected by a parent, or
 - ii. otherwise in need of protection as set out in Section 13 of the CFCSA.
- b. Any person with reason to believe that a child needs protection has a duty to report directly to a child welfare worker. Informing another person (e.g., a colleague or the principal) does not discharge your legal duty to report directly to a child welfare worker. You do not need to be certain that abuse and/or neglect has, is, or will occur; a child welfare worker will determine this and can discuss options and courses of action with you.
- c. The legal duty to report overrides any duty of confidentiality, except a solicitor-client relationship or where provisions of the Youth Criminal Justice Act apply.
- d. “Reason to believe” simply means that, based on what you have seen or information you have received, you believe a child has been or is likely to be at risk.

F. LINKS (REFERENCES)

B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/publicsafety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook_serviceprovider.pdf

Responding to Child Welfare Concerns: Your Role in Knowing When and What to Report

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/publicsafety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook_generalpublicbooklet.pdf

Safe, Caring & Orderly Schools resources: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/resources.htm>

G. REVISION HISTORY

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Description of Change	Sections	Person who Entered Revision (Position Title)	Person who Authorized Revision (Position Title)
20/08/2019	Addition of ASO & AASO	C, D, E	Board Secretary	Executive Director via President
12/04/2022	Titles adjustment to Executive Director/Head of School and Vice-Principal	E	Board Secretary	Executive Director

APPENDIX A
Contact Information

1. If a child or youth (19 and under) is in immediate danger:

CALL 911

2. If you need to contact a Child Welfare Officer any time day or night:

CALL 1 800 663 9122

3. If you need to contact a Delegated Aboriginal and Family Services Agency:

CALL 1 800 663 9122

and ask for your local Delegated Aboriginal and Family Services Agency

4. If a child or youth would like to talk with someone any time of the day or night:

CALL HELPLINE FOR CHILDREN 310 – 1235

No area code is needed, and they can remain anonymous.

For more information www.mcf.gov.bc.ca