



## **ACCOMMODATING DCS INVESTIGATIONS PROCEDURE (HUM-P015)**

Clarksville-Montgomery County School System

### **1.0 SCOPE:**

- 1.1 This procedure outlines the process for Principals and Department Heads to accommodate investigations of alleged child abuse conducted on school property by the state of Tennessee's Department of Children's Services (DCS) and/or law enforcement personnel.

The online version of this policy is official.  
Therefore, all printed versions of this document are unofficial copies.

### **2.0 RESPONSIBILITY:**

- 2.1. Director of Schools, Senior Leadership Team, Human Resources Director, School Principals, Department Heads
- 2.2 The Department of Children's Services (DCS) is charged with investigating cases of suspected child abuse and conducting all related interviews.

### **3.0 APPROVAL AUTHORITY:**

- 3.1 Chief Human Resources Officer

### **4.0 DEFINITIONS:**

- 4.1 Protocols: Protocols address behavior/responsibilities of school personnel in accommodating DCS and law enforcement personnel, procedures for DCS to access students and other school personnel, access to student's records as well as appropriate methods for bringing the student to the interview and returning student to the classroom.

### **5.0 PROCEDURE:**

- 5.1 Incident of abuse is reported to DCS and DCS begins an investigation.
  - 5.1.1 The school cooperates fully with the DCS caseworker and/or law enforcement personnel within the limits of the law.
  - 5.1.2 The principal or his/her designee represents the school to DCS and law enforcement personnel in a cordial and professional manner.
- 5.2 Principals follow established internal protocols to ensure investigations are properly accommodated.
  - 5.2.1 The school provides a private room for DCS/law enforcement interviews.
  - 5.2.2 Except in cases where school employees are suspected of being the perpetrator, the school is regarded as an appropriate neutral setting for conducting such interviews.
- 5.3 The principal or his/her designee insures the child is brought to the interview in such a way as to not call attention to the fact that someone from DCS/law enforcement is there to interview them. This may vary from school to school due to the age of the students.
- 5.4 The principal or his/her designee prepares the child for the interview by assuring him/or that they are not in trouble and have done nothing wrong.

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- 5.4.1 The principal or his/her designee informs the child that a DCS caseworker and/or a law enforcement officer is/are here to talk with him/her.
- 5.4.2 The principal or his/her designee introduces the child to the caseworker and/or officer and assures the child that he/she will be close by in case he/she is needed.
- 5.5 At the conclusion of the interview, the principal or his/her designee takes charge of the student and returns him/her to class if the student is deemed capable of doing so.
  - 5.5.1 If the child is not in condition to return to class, he/she should be placed with the guidance counselor/other designated adult until he/she is able to return to class.
- 5.6 If the DCS caseworker deems that it is not safe for the child to return home, the child may be removed from school and be placed in State Custody, or an order may be obtained from the appropriate court to remove the child.
- 5.7 The school permits caseworkers to view student records.
  - 5.7.1 Personal notes made and owned by school personnel will be treated according to guidance provided by State Department of Education legal counsel that states personal notes do not have to be surrendered, but information in those notes must be shared with the caseworker.
- 5.8 The principal, his or her designated representative and other school personnel answer any questions the DCS caseworker or law enforcement official may have to the best of their abilities.
- 5.9 DCS is always responsible for notifying parents or guardians of DCS intervention.
  - 5.9.1 School personnel do not notify parents or guardians of actions taken by or to be taken by DCS.
- 5.10 School personnel refer all questions or inquiries for information about the investigation from parents, guardians, or the news media to DCS or the local law enforcement agency.

### **6.0 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:**

- 6.1 Tennessee Code Annotated 37-1-4-1 and 37-1-611, 612
- 6.2 Federal law (20 United States Code 1232g(b)(1) and 34 Code of Federal Regulations 99.31(5) and 9.36
- 6.3 Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Procedure ([HUM-P014](#))
- 6.4 School Protocols
- 6.5 DCS sign-in registers



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### 6.6 Record of Referral

### 7.0 RECORD RETENTION TABLE:

<u>Identification</u>	<u>Storage</u>	<u>Retention</u>	<u>Disposition</u>	<u>Protection</u>
School Protocols	On-site	Two school years	Destroy after two school years	Secured office
DCS Sign in Registers	On-site	Two school years	Destroy after two school years	Secured office
Record of Referral (if used)	On-site	Two school years	Destroy after two school years	Secured office

### 8.0 REVISION HISTORY:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Rev.</u>	<u>Description of Revision:</u>
7/15/08		Initial Release

### 9.0 FLOWCHART:

9.1 A flowchart detailing this process can be found in "Exhibit A" of this procedure.

**\*\*\* End of Procedure \*\*\***

