



Child Abuse or Neglect Policy

Policy Number: 4010 Section: Chalo School Sub-Section: Personnel Interpreter: Principal/Education Director Authority: CEA Effective Date: October 24, 2019 Review by Date: September 1, 2020	References and Related Documents
---	---

Policy Spirit and Intent

The Community Education Authority recognizes the importance of child protection. This is the local child protection protocol between Chalo Independent School Society (Fort Nelson) and the Ministry for Children and Families MCFD. This protocol is not intended to replace the MCFD BC Handbook for Action of Child Abuse and Neglect (For Service Providers), but rather emphasize the need for an integrated approach for protecting children at the community level. This protocol summarizes the major steps each agency would take in the reporting, assessing and investigating child protection reports of school children.

1.0 When a Chalo School Employee Believes a Child is in Immediate Danger

- The employee reports directly to the RCMP and then proceeds with the steps described in Section 2.0, below (as per the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Section 22) and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*).

2.0 When a Chalo School Employee Suspects a Child Needs Protection

- When a teacher or other school employee has a reasonable suspicion that a child may need protection the employee will carry out the following procedures of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)* (Section 14) and of the *Criminal Code of Canada* (Section 215).

2.2 STEP 1: Record accurately all information pertinent to making a report, including, (see page 42-43 BC Handbook):

- a. the name and location of the child;
- b. any immediate concerns about the child’s safety
- c. any information as to why you believe the child is at risk
- d. any statements or disclosures made by the child
- e. the age and vulnerability of the child
- f. information on the family, parents, and alleged offenders

NOTE: Information given by the child should be recorded verbatim

STEP 2:

- The school employee is to then call the local MCFD office and ask to speak with an intake worker, saying, "I am calling to report a possible child protection concern." The information recorded under STEP 1 will be very useful to give to the MCFD social worker. An employee shall not inform parents about the concern without the approval from the investigating social worker, for this may jeopardize the investigation,



Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

especially when a parent may be the abuser. Reports are to be made on the same day the employee has grounds to suspect a child protection concern. If the local office is closed the employee is to call the MCFD Helpline for Children at 1-800- 663-9122 (see page 16 BC Handbook).

STEP 3:

- The school employee is to then immediately inform the Principal of the child protection concern. If there are reasons for which a school employee deems it inappropriate to report the incident to the child's school Principal, the employee is to instead immediately inform the Education Director and to then continue through the reporting procedure. The Education Director will then contact the Chair of the CEA who will inform the band designate.

NOTE: All personnel are reminded that they are not to investigate the nature of the concern at this or any other time (see page 37-39 BC Handbook).

NOTE: Responsibility for making a report to the MCFD rests with the person who has grounds to believe a child is in need of protection. This responsibility is not discharged by an employee reporting to any other person other than a delegate of the Director of Child, Family and Community Services other than a social worker in the local MCFD office (see page 17 BC Handbook).

3.0 When a Ministry For Children And Families Social Worker Receives a Report of Possible Child Needing Protection

- Upon receiving a report of possible child protection concern, the Ministry must assess the family situation and investigate as appropriate. Where possible, the reporter will be notified whether the report has been accepted for investigation. Upon the conclusion of the assessment and/or investigation, the reporter will usually be notified of the results of the investigation (see page 55 BC Handbook).
- It is important to note that it is the responsibility of the Ministry for Children and Families to report a case of suspected physical or sexual abuse to the RCMP. For a full outline of the considerations and steps in a child protection investigation please refer to pages 28 - 35 in the BC Handbook.

4.0 When a Ministry For Children And Families Social Worker Requests to Interview A Child(ren) at his/her School

- When the MCFD worker is required to interview a child(ren), the worker is to make a reasonable effort to inform the school principal as to the intent. Chalo School employees will be available to the MCFD worker and the RCMP to assist in any way as requested. If a social worker comes to the school to interview a child(ren) involved, the school administrator is to cooperate by offering a quiet space in the school for the interview. Children should remain in their class until the social worker attends the school and requests the child be brought for the interview. The social worker often needs to gather further information at the school prior to interviewing the child(ren). It can be very stressful for a child if they are already removed from class and have to wait for an extended period of time for the interview. The social worker may request someone be present in order to support the child(ren). If a conflict arises between the school personnel and a social worker and remains unresolved, it then may be referred to the Education Director and the District Supervisor of the MCFD.



Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

5.0 When a School Employee is Suspected of Abusing a Child or Children

- The reporting procedure in Section 2.0 of this protocol, Steps 1, 2 and 3 will be followed. In addition, the principal is to immediately notify, by phone, the Education Director. If a social worker receives a report he/she will notify the District Supervisor who will in turn notify the Education Director and the RCMP.

5.1 The Roles of the three key agencies:

- a. The Education Director or designate will investigate these cases on behalf of the CEA, and recommend appropriate action to the CEA as part of her/his legal responsibilities.
- b. The District Supervisor of the MCFD or designate will assess the report to decide how to respond to it, and commence an investigation if there is reason to believe that a child may need protection.
- c. The RCMP conduct an investigation to determine if a criminal offense may have been committed.

5.2 Coordinating the Response

- a. **Notification:** Whichever of the three key agencies receives the report shall notify immediately the other two. For example, a police officer who receives such a report shall notify immediately the Education Director and a social worker in the MCFD.
- b. **Initial Planning:** The Education Director or designate, the District Supervisor of the MCFD or designate, and the RCMP shall meet immediately: to determine in detail their respective roles and responsibilities in the case; to decide upon any immediate steps which should be taken to assure the safety and well being of the children involved; and, to arrange for the notification of the parents of the children involved.
- c. **Child Safety:** The three agencies will ensure that the child or children are safe from harm during the investigation.
- d. **Notification of affected parents:** The Education Director is responsible for ensuring that the parents of children who may have been affected have been notified.
- e. **Contact with the alleged offender:** When the RCMP are conducting a criminal investigation it is preferable that the police make the initial contact with the alleged offender. Other investigators should honour this by not contacting the offender unless doing so is required to fulfill a legal responsibility.
- f. **Notification of criminal proceedings:** The RCMP should keep the Education Director and the District Supervisor of the MCFD informed of the status of the RCMP investigation, and of decisions regarding the laying of and proceeding with charges. Where the RCMP have officially advised the Education Director that charges will be laid, the Education Director should ensure that affected parents are notified.
- g. **Notifying others of the actions of the School:** The Education Director should ensure that the MCFD and the RCMP are notified of the recommendation and the actions taken by the CEA. Where the CEA dismisses or disciplines a teacher or an administrative officer, the Independent School Act requires that the CEA report it without delay to the Ministry of Education and Teacher Regulation Branch giving the reasons.



Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

6.0 Awareness and Training

- Chalo School will make every effort to ensure that all employees are informed of the reporting procedures outlined above, as well as possible indicators of child protection concerns (see pp. 27-29, BC Handbook). Chalo School and MCFD will put on workshops dealing with the protection of children to enhance the awareness of school employees on these topics.
- The protocol should be reviewed by the Principal, Education Director, District supervisor of MCFD, and RCMP on an annual basis.

6.3 Review of Protocol

Executive Director of Community Services
Fort Nelson First Nation

_____ Date

Chalo School
Principal

Ministry for Children
and Families (Fort Nelson)

RCMP, Fort Nelson

_____ Date

_____ Date

_____ Date

7.0 Glossary (from: The BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect)

- A number of the terms used in this handbook have specific meanings in the context of the British Columbia child welfare system. These are defined below to help ensure clarity and support a collaborative response to suspected child abuse and neglect.

Note: child abuse and neglect are defined in detail in the **Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect** section of this handbook.

- Aboriginal:** includes First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples
- Caregiver:** a person who is legally responsible for a child's day-to-day care, for example, a foster parent
- Child:** in British Columbia, under the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA), a child is anyone under the age of 19
- Child welfare worker:** a person delegated under the CFCSA to provide child welfare services, including responses to suspected child abuse and neglect
- Delegated Aboriginal Child 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 child, Family and Community Service Act to provide child welfare services, including responses to suspected child abuse and neglect



Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

- f. **Director:** a person designated by the Minister of Children and Family Development under the Child, Family and Community Service Act. The director may delegate any or all of his/her powers, duties, and responsibilities under the Act
- g. **Parent:** the mother of a child; the father of a child; a person to whom custody of the child has been granted by a court order or agreement; or, a person with whom the child resides and who stands in place of the child’s mother or father
- h. **Service provider:** any of a wide range of employees, contractors, and volunteers who provide services for children and families, including:
 - Child care providers
 - Child and family mental health counsellors
 - Child welfare workers
 - Coroners
 - Facilitators and analysts employed by Community Living British Columbia
 - Paramedics
 - Physicians and other health care practitioners
 - Police
 - Teachers and other school board employees and personnel
 - Transition house staff
 - Victim service workers
 - Youth justice workers
 - Youth service workers

8.0 Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

Understanding what child abuse and neglect are and knowing how to take appropriate action are critical in ensuring the safety and well being of children. The following plain-language definitions will help you understand and respond to child abuse and neglect. While recognizing that one profession may use a particular term somewhat differently from another profession, the definitions below are intended to support the work of all service providers.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a deliberate physical assault or action by a person that results in, or is likely to result in, physical harm to a child. It includes the use of unreasonable force to discipline a child or prevent a child from harming him/herself or others. The injuries sustained by the child may vary in severity and range from minor bruising, burns, welts, or bite marks to major fractures of the bones or skull to, in the most extreme situations, death.

Emotional Abuse

This is the most difficult type of abuse to define and recognize. It may range from ignoring to habitually humiliating the child to withholding life-sustaining nurturing. Generally, it involves acts or omission by those in contact with a child that are likely to have serious, negative emotional impacts. Emotional abuse may occur separately from, or along with, other forms of abuse and neglect. It includes the emotional harm caused by witnessing domestic violence. Emotional abuse can include a pattern of:

- Scapegoating
- Rejection



Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

- Verbal attacks on the child
- Threats
- Insults
- Humiliation

Emotional Harm

When emotional abuse is chronic and persistent, it can result in emotional harm to the child. Under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, a child is defined as emotionally harmed if they demonstrate severe:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Withdrawal
- Self-destructive or aggressive behaviour

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is when a child is used (or likely to be used) for the sexual gratification of another person. It includes:

- Touching or invitation to touch for sexual purposes
- Intercourse (vaginal, oral, or anal)
- Menacing or threatening sexual acts, obscene gestures, obscene communications, or stalking
- Sexual references to the child's body/behaviour by words/gestures
- Requests that the child expose their body for sexual purposes
- Deliberate exposure of the child to sexual activity or material
- Sexual aspects of organized or ritual abuse

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse that occurs when a child engages in a sexual activity, usually through manipulation or coercion, in exchange for money, drugs, food, shelter, or other considerations. Sexual activity includes:

- Performing sexual acts
- Sexually explicit activity for entertainment
- Involvement with escort services
- Appearing in pornographic images

Children living on the street are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Children in the sex trade are not prostitutes or criminals. They are victims of abuse.

--- Balance of page intentionally blank. Signature page follows -



Chalo Independent School Society – Policy 4010

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Dated at Fort Nelson, British Columbia on: October 24, 2019

Approved, Signed, Sealed and Delivered by the Chalo Independent School Society Community Education Authority (Board).

Chair, Chrystal Fincaryk

Vice-Chair, Kyla Kotchea

Director, Santana Behn

Director, Coreen Loe

Director, Roberta Michel

Council Director, Theresa Fincaryk Sutherland