

	Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse	
Human Resources	Administrative Policy - TBD	Adopted October 2012 Page 1 of 2

1.0 Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy Objective

It is the policy of Columbia Basin College (“CBC” or the “College”) that all employees report child abuse and neglect as described below. The report must be made at the first opportunity, and never later than 48 hours after a college employee has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect. This policy complies with Senate Bill 5991, which amended RCW 26.44.030, an Act relating to reporting child abuse or neglect, and RCW 28B.10.846, adding reporting responsibilities to employees of institutions of higher education.

2.0 Reporters

Academic, administrative and athletic department employees, including student employees, who, through observations made or information received during the course of their employment, have reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect must make any report directly to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Social and Health Services. RCW 28B.10.846(1)(a). The Vice President of Human Resources & Legal Affairs will assist employees in reporting to these agencies when requested.

All other employees who have reasonable cause to believe a child has suffered abuse or neglect must report such abuse or neglect immediately to the administrator identified by the institution, which for CBC is the Vice President for Human Resources & Legal Affairs. RCW 26.44.030(3). The Vice President of Human Resources & Legal Affairs must make a report to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Social and Health Services.

Please note, the reporting requirement does not apply to the discovery of abuse or neglect that occurred during childhood if it is discovered after the child has become an adult. However, if there is reasonable cause to believe other children are or may be at risk of abuse or neglect by the accused, the reporting requirement does apply. RCW 26.44.030(2).

3.0 Training

CBC will communicate this policy to all employees on an annual basis to ensure that they have knowledge about mandatory reporting responsibilities. RCW 28B.10.846(2).

4.0 Immunity From Liability

Any person reporting alleged child abuse or neglect in good faith or testifying as to alleged child abuse or neglect in a judicial proceeding shall be immune from any legal liability arising out of such reporting and testimony. RCW 26.44.060(1)(a). A person who, in good faith and without gross negligence, cooperates in an investigation arising as a result of a report shall not be subject

to civil liability arising out of his or her cooperation. This does not apply to a person who caused or allowed the child abuse or neglect to occur. RCW 26.44.060(5).

Additionally, in cases in which a public employee subject to reporting requirements acts in good faith and without gross negligence in his or her reporting duty, and if the employee's judgment as to what constitutes reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect is being challenged, the public employer shall provide for the legal defense of the employee. RCW 26.44.032.

A person who, intentionally and in bad faith, knowingly makes a false report of alleged abuse or neglect or fails to report alleged abuse or neglect shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and violation of College policy. RCW 26.44.060(1)(b) and (4).

5.0 Reporting Guidance

The Vice President of Human Resources & Legal Affairs is the College's designee to receive reports and provide guidance regarding an employee's reporting obligations. The Vice President of Human Resources & Legal Affairs may designate another Human Resources Office employee as his/her designee in the event of his/her absence.

6.0 Definitions

Abuse or 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; or the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to the child. An abused child is a child who has been subjected to child abuse or neglect as defined in this section. RCW 26.44.020(1).

Academic Employee means any teacher, counselor, librarian, or department head, who is employed by any college district, whether full or part time, with the exception of the chief administrative officer of, and any administrator in, each college district. RCW 28B.52.020(2).

Administrator means any person employed either full or part time by the college district and who performs administrative functions as at least fifty percent or more of his or her assignments, and has responsibilities to hire, dismiss, or discipline other employees. RCW 28B.52.020(3).

Child means any person under the age of eighteen. RCW 26.44.020(2).

Department means the Department of Social and Health Services ("DSHS"). RCW 26.44.020(8).

Law Enforcement Agency means the police department, prosecuting attorney, the Washington State Patrol, or the Sheriff's Office. RCW 26.44.020(12).

7.0 Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

If there is reasonable cause to believe a child has suffered abuse or neglect, the report must be made at the first opportunity, but in no case longer than 48 hours.

When reporting, provide the following information, the name, address, and age of the child and parent(s) or guardian(s), the nature and extent of the child abuse or neglect, and any information

about previous incidences of abuse or neglect, if known. The report must also include the identity of the accused, if known. RCW 26.44.040.

As a mandated reporter, an employee providing his or her name when reporting will allow it to be documented that the employee has met his or her legal obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

8.0 Reporting Agencies

A report may be provided directly by contacting DSHS Child Protective Services in the following ways:

- Daytime – (509) 737-2800
- Nights & Weekends – 1 (800) 562-5624
- Hotline – 1-866-ENDHARM or 1 (866) 363-4276
- TTY Callers – 1-800-624-6186 to place a direct TTY call.

Suspected abuse or neglect can also be reported to local law enforcement agencies by dialing 911.