

Supporting Our Students:



A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse



A Message from the Inspector of Independent Schools

Child abuse is a serious problem. Its impacts can last a lifetime and even extend to future generations. Understanding child abuse and neglect and knowing how to respond are critical.

School personnel are responsible both for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect and also for cooperating with resulting investigations. In addition, identifying and supporting students who have experienced child abuse and neglect is important.

Ensuring that a School Authority has policies and procedures in place to respond promptly and effectively to incidents of child abuse and neglect is a responsible approach to protecting students as well as the interests of the School Authority. This document provides guidelines for independent schools when establishing policy and responding to child abuse and neglect.

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 effectively respond to incidents of suspected child abuse and neglect and to ensure that children are protected.

I wish to thank those who participated in the preparation and revisions of this guide, including representatives from the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools and the Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA), as well as participants from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Ministry of Attorney General and the RCMP.

Purpose and Limitations of the Guide

Supporting Our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse is intended to provide basic information and best practices in a practical and easily readable format. It is not designed to be an in-depth review of these matters. For further information about particular topics, users are encouraged to refer to the resource materials listed at the end of the document. A *Glossary of Terms* is also provided at the end of the document.

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It's Your Legal Duty to Report

Everyone who has a reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be

- physically harmed, sexually abused or exploited, or neglected by a parent, or
- otherwise in need of protection as set out in section 13 of *the Child, Family and Community Service Act*

is legally responsible under section 14 of that *Act* to report promptly to a child welfare worker.

If you are uncertain about your duty to report, consult with a child welfare worker who can discuss the options and course of action with you. In British Columbia, a child is anyone under the age of 19.

What is Child Abuse and Neglect?

Child abuse and neglect occurs with alarming frequency. As public awareness of the subject has grown, so has the number of reported and confirmed cases. The following definitions are adapted from *The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect (2005)*.

PHYSICAL ABUSE is a deliberate, non-accidental physical assault or injury by an adult or significantly older or more powerful child that results in, or is likely to result in, physical harm to a child.

SEXUAL ABUSE is the use of a child for sexual gratification by a person in a position of trust and/or authority, or by a significantly older or more powerful child. It includes sexual touching, menacing or threatening sexual acts, obscene gestures, or deliberate exposure of the child to sexual activity or material.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is a pattern of destructive behaviour or verbal attacks by an adult on a child. Typical behaviours may include rejecting, terrorizing, ignoring, isolating, humiliating, insulting, scapegoating, exploiting or corrupting a child.

NEGLECT is failure to provide for a child's basic needs: food, clothing, adequate shelter, supervision and medical care. Neglect is the form of abuse most frequently reported to the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION includes permitting, encouraging or requiring a child to engage in conduct of a sexual nature for: stimulation, gratification or self-interest of another person; prostitution; or production of material of a pornographic nature.

Recognizing Possible Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

Abused and neglected children show signs of their suffering. Some of the most common indicators are listed below. Remember, these are warning signs. They do not necessarily mean abuse and neglect are occurring. The more you observe, the more concerned you should be.

Possible Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect:

- unexplained bruises, different coloured bruises, welts, cuts, burns, bite marks - especially on the face, lower back, thighs or upper arms
- unexplained fractures, repeated injuries over time
- constant complaints such as sore throats or stomach aches that have no medical explanation
- lack of proper hygiene, constant hunger, clothing inappropriate for weather conditions
- torn, stained or bloody underwear
- irritation, bruising, bleeding, pain or itching near genitals or anus
- bruises on breasts, buttocks or thighs
- sudden onset of nightmares, bedwetting, and/or fear of the dark
- cuts or sores on arms or legs
- fear of going home, attempts to run away
- sudden change in attitude towards someone previously liked and trusted
- expressing bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge not typical for age, language or play
- unable to concentrate
- sexually acting out
- becoming anxious and fearful after being outgoing and friendly
- expressing sadness, crying frequently, becoming depressed
- lacking friends or not participating in activities
- appearing lethargic
- showing poor impulse control, physical aggression
- irregular or non-attendance at school

Protect Confidentiality of Personal Information

Share information regarding an allegation of child abuse and neglect only with those persons who have a legitimate reason for receiving the information (i.e., Child welfare worker, the police, the principal and/or Appointed School Official).

Schools should establish policies and procedures to protect personal information against improper or unauthorized disclosure and use.

Recognize that improper disclosure of information may prejudice the child protection investigation or other related investigations.

Handling a Disclosure

How a Student Tells Us About Being Abused

Sometimes a student will tell an adult directly that she/he is being abused or neglected. Sometimes the student uses indirect ways to tell you - through art, drama, writing or hints. These methods are all known as disclosures. If a student discloses to you, follow the steps below:

- be supportive by staying calm, listening and being non-judgmental
- tell the student you're sorry it happened and let the student know it's not his/her fault
- reassure the student that she/he has done the right thing by telling you
- get only the essential facts; do not interview the student
- do not promise to keep the disclosure a secret
- tell the student that you will be making a report to the proper authorities
- do not say everything will be fine now; it may take a lot of time before everything is fine again
- promptly report the disclosure to a child welfare worker
- document verbatim what the student tells you; do not include personal opinions or judgments; maintain confidentiality of the documentation
- *if a student is in danger, contact the police*
- notify the Appointed School Official or principal (in accordance with school policy) that a report has been made to a child welfare worker and/or police.

What to Report

When you report suspected child abuse and neglect, the child welfare worker will ask about:

- the student's age, name and address, phone number
- any immediate concerns for the student's safety
- why you believe the child needs protection
- any statements or disclosures the student has made
- the student's parents and other family members
- the alleged offender's name, address
- any other children, such as siblings, who may be involved or at risk
- any previous incidents or concerns for the student
- any other relevant information such as the student's language, culture, disabilities or special needs

The person making the report is not responsible for determining whether the abuse and/or neglect actually happened or is likely to happen. This is the responsibility of the child welfare worker.

How to Report

Report to a child welfare worker in either a Ministry of Children and Family Development office or a First Nations/Aboriginal child welfare agency that provides child protection services.

- Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call the local office (listed in the blue pages of the phone book, or refer to <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/regions/index.htm>)

Or

the local delegated First Nations/Aboriginal child welfare agency (phone number available by calling the local ministry office or at http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/aboriginal/pdf/aboriginal_delegated.pdf)

Monday to Friday, 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. and all day Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays, call 310-1234 (no area code required).

- Deaf (TTY) only: 1-866-660-0505

Don't worry about calling the wrong place; offices and agencies are able to refer you to the right place.

Tell the child welfare worker as much as you know. She/he will listen to your concerns and may ask you some questions. Your name will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed without your consent unless authorized by law.

Reporting can be the beginning of a positive change and can keep the student, and perhaps other children, from harm.

Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect

Four Common Scenarios that are Likely to Occur in a School Setting.

When concerns about child abuse and neglect arise in the school setting, school personnel respond to the following most common circumstances:

- responding to alleged child abuse and neglect by a parent, caregiver, friend, relative or other person
- responding to alleged child abuse and neglect by a school employee, contracted service provider or volunteer
- responding to alleged abusive behaviour at school by a student under age 12
- responding to alleged abusive behaviour at school by a student age 12 and over, including a young offender guilty of an offence under the federal *Youth Criminal Justice Act*

The four scenarios, each with procedural steps, are outlined on the following pages of this guide.

Role of Child Welfare Worker

- assesses the report
- ensures the safety of the student
- commences an investigation if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child needs protection
- contacts parents
- may provide services to the student and family

Role of Police

- protects a student in immediate danger
- conducts a criminal investigation
- interviews alleged offender

Role of School Personnel

- observes the student for indicators of abuse
- handles disclosures from students
- promptly reports to a Child welfare worker
- notifies the principal about the report
- supports the student emotionally
- monitors the student for signs of stress
- refers the student for counselling

Role of Principal

- ensures the ongoing support and safety of the student
- assists in securing personnel, resources and/or making arrangements for a child protection interview when held in the school setting
- refers inquiries about child protection and/or criminal investigations from parents to a child welfare worker, police and/or the Appointed School Official

Role of Appointed School Official

- investigates where appropriate on behalf of the School Authority
- ensures a safe school environment during investigations
- consults with the child welfare worker and/or police
- ensures that no school employee interferes with any investigations
- communicates with parents with respect to actions taken by the School Authority
- reports to the British Columbia College of Teachers and/or the Inspector of Independent Schools when the School Authority dismisses, suspends or otherwise disciplines a certified teacher (*Independent School Act* section 7); Inspector's Order I 1/92, Discipline Reporting Order)
- refers student(s) for counselling according to school policies

Responding to Alleged Child Abuse and Neglect by Parent, Caregiver, Friend, Relative or Other Person

Scenario #1

Step 1 The Report

- promptly report allegations of child abuse and neglect to a child welfare worker
- *call the police if a student is in immediate danger*

Step 2 Documenting the Information

- information regarding any reported allegation should be properly documented
- follow any policy and procedures for documentation established by your School Authority
- information should be treated with the strictest confidentiality

Step 3 Notifying the Principal

- notify the principal that a report was made to a child welfare worker and/or the police
- protect the privacy of the student

Step 4 Do Not Contact Parents or Offender

- the child welfare worker and/or the police will contact the parents
- the police contact the alleged offender when a criminal investigation is taking place

Step 5 The Investigations

- cooperate fully with any investigation which may be conducted by the child welfare worker and/or a criminal investigation by the police
- at the discretion of the investigators, a support person may be present for the child during the interview

Step 6 Sharing Information

- provide information requested by the child welfare worker and/or the police
- the child welfare worker must report the results of the investigation to the person who made the report, unless reporting would cause emotional or physical harm to anyone, or if a criminal investigation is underway or contemplated

Step 7 Supporting the Student

- be available to listen and be supportive

- monitor the student's well-being
- consult with the counsellor where appropriate

Responding to Alleged Child Abuse and Neglect by a School Employee, Contract Service Provider or Volunteer

Scenario #2

Step 1 The Report

- promptly report alleged child abuse and/or neglect to a child welfare worker as required by the *Child, Family and Community Services Act*
- As a best practice, you may always consult a child welfare worker when you are unsure about whether to make a report
- notify the Appointed School Official that a report has been made
- *call the police if a student is in immediate danger and/or an alleged criminal offence has occurred*
- do not notify the alleged offender; this responsibility is determined by the Appointed School Official in consultation with the child welfare worker and/or the police
- the Appointed School Official reports to the British Columbia College of Teachers or the Inspector of Independent Schools when the School Authority dismisses, suspends or otherwise disciplines a certified teacher (*Independent School Act* (section 7); Inspector's Order I 1/92, Discipline Reporting Order)
- maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of both student and employee

Step 2 Documenting the Information

- information regarding any reported allegation should be properly documented
- follow any policy and procedures for documentation established by your School Authority
- information should be treated with the strictest confidentiality

Step 3 Initial Response by the Appointed School Official, Child Welfare Worker and/or Police

- the Appointed School Official, the child welfare worker and police collaborate to:
 - ensure the safety and well-being of the students involved and any other children who may be at risk
 - clarify their respective responsibilities during the investigations
 - determine who will contact the parents and/or interview the student(s)
- if the welfare of the student(s) might be threatened by the presence of an employee, the Appointed School Official recommends to the School Authority the suspension or termination of the employment of the employee
- when a child welfare worker is responding to a report of child abuse by someone other than a parent, the child welfare worker assesses whether the parent is willing and able to protect the child from harm

- after the assessment, the child welfare worker determines whether or not there are grounds for proceeding with an investigation

Step 4 The Investigations by the Child Welfare Worker and/or Police and Appointed School Official

Persons conducting investigations need to work collaboratively, sharing information where they are legally permitted. A priority should be to limit the emotional impact on the child as much as possible by treating the child complainant sensitively, keeping the number of interviews to a minimum and providing plenty of support.

Child Welfare Worker

- conducts the child protection investigation
- determines if a child needs protection

Police

- determines if a criminal offence may have occurred
- interviews the alleged offender, the student involved and other potential witnesses in connection with the criminal investigation

Appointed School Official

- facilitates the investigations of the child welfare worker and/or police by ensuring that employees cooperate with the ongoing investigations
- initiates a disciplinary investigation of the conduct of the employee
- investigates and determines what action should be taken by the School Authority if the alleged conduct involves a contracted service provider or volunteer

Step 5 Sharing Information

School Personnel

- do not contact the parents or the alleged offender
- refer inquiries to the Appointed School Official, child welfare worker and/or police, as directed
- provide information requested by the child welfare worker (in connection with a child protection investigation), the police (in connection with a criminal investigation) and the Appointed School Official (in connection with disciplinary action)

Child Welfare Worker

- the child welfare worker must report the results of the investigation to the person who submitted the report, unless reporting would cause emotional or physical harm to anyone, or if a criminal investigation is underway or contemplated
- at the discretion of the investigators, a support person may be present for the child during the interview in order to ensure that the interview process is not jeopardized

Step 6 Supporting Students and School Personnel

- Appointed School Official informs parents of counselling services available from the school(s) and/or in the community
- Appointed School Official collaborates with professionals in community to develop follow-up plans, referrals for services and/or critical incident debriefing for students and staff, as appropriate

Responding to Alleged Abusive Behaviour at School by a Student

Scenario #3 and #4

Abusive behaviour by a student can occur in class, on or near school property, while travelling to and from school, or while the student is at lunch. The following information will guide you in responding to abusive behaviour by a student at school as outlined in Scenario #3 and #4 on the following pages of this guide.

The principal is responsible for ensuring a safe school environment while children are in attendance at school and/or participating in school activities. The principal must be notified about any abusive behaviour occurring at school.

If there is reason to believe that a student needs protection report promptly to a child welfare worker.

If a student or staff member is in immediate danger call the police.

Where a student has assaulted or endangered another person, call the police for assistance and report promptly to a child welfare worker.

There is no need to report:

- normal sexual play or exploration between students of similar ages
- minor altercations or aggression between students
- any other activity that is within the bounds of normal childhood behaviour

Students under 12 years of age are not criminally responsible for their actions and, therefore, are not charged under the *Criminal Code* of Canada. A student who is 12 to 18 years of age may be charged with a criminal offence under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

Responding to Alleged Abusive Behaviour at School by a Student Under Age 12

Scenario #3

Step 1 The Report to the Principal

- when abusive behaviour between students occurs at school, school personnel should immediately notify the principal
- the principal ensures the safety of the victim and alleged offender
- *call the police if a student or staff member is in immediate danger and/or a criminal offence has occurred*

Step 2 Assessment of Student's Abusive Behaviour by School Personnel

- whenever a person has reason to believe that a student needs protection, a report must be made promptly to a child welfare worker
- factors a person should consider when assessing whether or not she/he has reason to believe a student (victim and/or alleged abuser) needs protection include:
 - the seriousness or potential seriousness of the abusive behaviour
 - the existence of a power imbalance between the students (e.g., differences in size, ages or intellectual capacity or a gang situation)
 - whether the behaviour resulted, or is likely to result, in harm to the student
 - whether the behaviour is impulsive or premeditated
 - the willingness and ability of the involved students' parents to respond appropriately
 - whether incidents of aggression or victimization are recurring

Step 3 The Report to a Child Welfare Worker

- once a person has reason to believe a child needs protection there is no discretion about whether or not to make a child protection report
- the principal and staff person (who witnessed the abusive behaviour or received the disclosure) may make a joint report to the child welfare worker (conference call)

Step 4 Documenting the Information

- information regarding any reported allegation should be properly documented
- follow any policy and procedures for documentation established by your School Authority
- information should be treated with the strictest confidentiality

Step 5 The Investigations

- school personnel must cooperate fully with all investigations by the child welfare worker, and/or Appointed School Official, and in a criminal investigation with the police
- at the discretion of the investigators, a support person may be present for the child during the interview in order to ensure that the interview process is not jeopardized

Step 6 Sharing Information

- provide information requested by the child welfare worker, police and/or Appointed School Official
- the child welfare worker will report the results of the investigation to the person initiating the report and the student's parents, as authorized by legislation

Step 7 Follow-up Response

- if the principal or Appointed School Official determines that the offending student threatens the welfare of others, she/he takes appropriate action to ensure the safety of all students
- the principal and/or the Appointed School Official may:
 - discipline the offender in accordance with the school policies
 - develop a safety and support plan for the student and/or the school
 - offer support services, such as counselling, to the students involved
 - contact parents of students involved if it does not jeopardize the investigation of the child welfare worker and/or police
- a teacher and/or counsellor may:
 - support the students
 - monitor the students' well-being
 - consult with and/or refer to other specialized service providers

Responding to Alleged Abusive Behaviour at School by a Student Age 12 and over, including a Young Offender

Scenario #4

A student 12 to 18 years of age can be charged with a criminal offence under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. Scenario #4 follows all the steps in Scenario #3 with the additional *Step 3a* outlined below.

Step 3a Report to Police and Youth Probation Officer

- call the police if a student age 12 or over is alleged to have committed a criminal offence at school

- notify the police and youth probation officer of a breach of a young offender's probation order or abusive behaviour that may constitute a breach

Safety on the Internet

- the Internet opens the classroom to the exploitation of students by unscrupulous adults
- child exploiters will use apparently innocent and clever ways to entice the student via the Internet
- supervise when students are surfing; ensure they visit appropriate sites and use chat rooms safely
- become informed about the degree to which computer system defences (such as filters and firewalls) screen out items.
- if messages or bulletin board items are suggestive, obscene, belligerent or threatening, forward them to the principal
- "contract" with students that they must tell if they are approached, or if they sense that a contact is inappropriate

Internet Safety Tips for Students

- do not give out personal information like your name, school, address or phone number or put your picture on a web page
- not everyone you meet in a chat room is who they say they are (e.g., a 53-year-old may pretend to be a 12-year-old)
- do not share home, school or personal problems with anyone on the Internet
- if someone harasses you online or makes you feel uncomfortable in any way, tell your teacher or parent(s) and/or see a counsellor for help

Supporting Our Students Who Have Been Abused and/or Neglected

Impact of Abuse and Neglect on Our Students

Students who have been abused and neglected or who witness abuse and neglect of their loved ones may experience:

- a sense of loss of their childhood
- feelings of betrayal by adults in positions of trust
- difficulties in forming healthy relationships
- feelings of shame and humiliation
- feelings of guilt about being responsible for the abuse
- fear of being re-victimized
- feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, anxiety or depression
- feelings of anger or rage
- hyperactivity, poor impulse control or inattentiveness

In addition, a student may engage in self-destructive behaviours such as self-mutilation, eating disorders, conduct disorders, criminal activities, suicide attempts, and/or be absent or truant from school.

Helping Our Students Rebuild Resiliency and Trust

Within the context of the Independent School's perspective, a student who has suffered from the trauma of abuse needs school personnel to:

- focus on her/his assets and strengths
- be warm and accepting
- be hopeful and believe that the student can work through this adversity
- be an understanding, non-judgmental and respectful listener
- set clear expectations and goals for the student
- be a positive role model
- create a welcoming classroom environment
- provide consistency and stability in the classroom
- set clear boundaries and clear rules of conduct for all students
- provide routine and structure
- monitor the student for high stress level, anxiety, exhaustion, self-destructive behaviours
- work collaboratively with all service providers
- consult with a counsellor
- report new suspicions of abuse about the student
- treat him/her like the other students

Taking Care of Ourselves (School Personnel)

Child abuse challenges all of us - our beliefs, our spirits and our relationships with people. When abuse touches one of our students or someone close to us, it is stressful. Take good care of yourself while you care for and support students who have been abused.

You may experience many different kinds of feelings and concerns: some frustration that the process takes time, worries about your students' well-being, and apprehension about the impact reporting will have on your relationship with the students and their families. You may become irritable or exhausted while supporting the students as they work through the issues and trauma of being abused.

Learning how to manage the stress that results from being actively involved with students who have been abused is important to your health and well-being. Here are some tips:

- remind yourself that you are not responsible for the abuse
- maintain firm boundaries with your student
- maintain good physical health, and routines; relax and exercise
- talk with a counsellor if you begin to feel anxious, uncomfortable or exhausted
- seek professional help if you feel overwhelmed by the students' day-to-day struggles

Questions and Answers

How are children protected?

If it appears the student may need protection under section 13 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, a child welfare worker will start an investigation. In all child protection investigations a child welfare worker will see and interview the child, the child's parents, all other children in the household, the alleged offender and any other witnesses. If the child is Aboriginal, his/her Band or community may also be involved. If a student needs protection, the child welfare worker will take whatever steps are most appropriate and least disruptive to protect the child.

If I am unsure whether the student needs protection, with whom should I consult?

Contact the local Ministry of Children and Family Development office or delegated First Nations/Aboriginal child welfare agency and ask to speak to a child welfare worker. The child welfare worker is the person who has the training and expertise to determine if you need to make a report. The child welfare worker will keep your call for consultation confidential. If, after the consultation, the child welfare worker determines that a report must be made it is your responsibility to report promptly.

What do I do if my student minimizes the abuse or recants and begs me not to tell anyone about the disclosure?

You must report child abuse. This is your duty under the law. Reassure the student that he/she did the right thing in telling you. Reassure the student that the abuse is not his/her fault. Let the student know you want to help keep him/her safe. Tell the student that you are going to call someone who can help him/her right away. Tell the student that you will be there to support him/her. When you report abuse, you are taking the first and most important step in getting help for the student.

How do I deal with my fear to report?

Recognize that it is natural to feel apprehensive about making a report, particularly if it involves a colleague or people you know. Remember that everyone who has reason to believe that a child needs protection, under section 13 of the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* has a **legal duty to promptly report** to a child welfare worker. By reporting you are helping the student.

What are the consequences for me if I have reason to believe a student needs protection and I do not report?

The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* imposes a duty on any person who has reason to believe that a child needs protection to promptly report the matter

to a child welfare worker at a Ministry of Children and Family Development office, delegated First Nations/Aboriginal child welfare agency or to call the Helpline for Children. Failure to report in these circumstances constitutes an offence under the *Act* punishable by a \$10,000 fine and/or six months imprisonment.

If I notify the principal or Appointed School Official about a student's disclosure of abuse and neglect, must I still report to a child welfare worker?

Yes, the legal duty to report is the responsibility of each individual. 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.

Why is "confidentiality" important?

The student and others who may be involved are entitled to have their privacy respected. Personal information of abuse must not be shared except with persons who have a legitimate interest in receiving the information, such as child welfare workers or the police. The casual sharing of information with friends or colleagues may result in inappropriate disclosure of information causing distress to individuals involved, feeding the rumour mill and prejudicing ongoing investigations. Students and others who may be involved are entitled to have their privacy respected.

Will the child welfare worker keep my identity confidential?

Under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, the identity of the person who makes a report will not be revealed without consent unless authorized by law.

What happens to students if they need to be removed from the home?

Social workers only remove children from their homes when they are in immediate danger or when "no less disruptive measures" are available to protect them. Whenever children are taken from their families for their own protection, a court process begins. Family Court judges hear evidence from all sides and decide with whom children will live. Children who cannot safely live with their parents, family members or close friends, are placed in foster homes that can meet their needs. Whenever possible, the child's extended family is the preferred environment, should the child be unable to return home.

What should I do if I am accused of abusing one of my students?

You should contact your lawyer for advice.

Glossary of Terms

The following definitions will assist you in using this guide:

“Appointed School Official” means a person appointed by the School Authority to perform a duty or duties described in this guide; a School Authority may delegate duties to one or more Appointed School Officials such as a principal, superintendent, the chairperson of a committee of the members of the School Authority or any member of that committee

“Counsellor” means a person or agency appointed by the School Authority to provide counselling (e.g., a trained counsellor, pastor or teacher)

“Independent School” or **“School”** means an Independent School as defined in the *Independent School Act* of British Columbia

“Parent(s)” means

- (a) the mother or father of a child
- (b) the person legally entitled to custody or guardianship of the person of the child; or
- (c) the person with whom a child resides and who stands in the place of the child’s mother or father

“Principal” means the teacher responsible for administering and supervising an Independent School in accordance with the definition in the *Independent School Act*

“School Authority” means the entity operating an independent school as defined in the *Independent School Act*

“Child Welfare Worker” is a person employed by the Ministry of Children and Family Development or a delegated First Nations/Aboriginal child welfare agency who is trained and delegated to provide child welfare services on behalf of a designated Director

Resources

- **The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect (2005)**
http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_protection/publications.htm
- **Safe, Caring & Orderly Schools** resources (e.g. *Responding to Children’s Problem Sexual Behaviours in Elementary Schools: A Resource for Educator* and *Focus on Bullying: A Prevention Program for Elementary School Communities*) <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/resources.htm>
- **Institute for Safe Schools of British Columbia** - <http://www.iss-bc.ca/>
Phone: 1-888-224-7233
- **Helpline for Children** Phone: 310-1234 (no area code needed) from anywhere in BC

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