Washington County School District
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Saint George, Utah 84770
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Administrative Letter A102

DCFS Student Interviews

Administrative Letter #102 DCFS Student Interviews - Updated 12-3-14

DATE: December 3, 2014

FROM: Lyle Cox, Human Resource Director

SUBJECT: DCFS Student Interviews

What do you need to know when a DCFS (Division of Child and Family Services) caseworker or Police Officer asks to interview a student in school? … Cooperate

It is a question that has been asked several times and it is important to know what to do. Failure to cooperate with a valid investigation is extremely problematic and creates the potential for criminal or civil liability.

(1) **IDENTIFICATION:** IN EVERY CASE CHECK THE CASEWORKER'S or OFFICER'S IDENTIFICATION! Most caseworkers have picture ID cards and either wear them or present them at the time of request. With the exception of newer employees, they may not yet have a State ID badge because they can only obtain them from Salt Lake City so, new employees get them when they attend training. If you have a caseworker that doesn't have an ID card they may still be legitimate, but you should always contact the DCFS office or the Police Department to make sure. **Do not require to the DCSF investigator or Officer to sign in- once proper ID has been provided.**

(2) **INVESTIGATION LETTER:** A caseworker will normally present the school secretary or administrator with an introduction investigation letter. This should occur in the majority of cases however, there are occasions when an investigator may be working in the field and not have the letter with them. Be aware that in an emergency situation DCFS will need to see a student without an introduction letter. As noted, the Caseworker must still provide identification.

(3) **PERMISSION:** A DCFS caseworker or Police Officer does not need school permission to conduct interviews of students concerning possible abuse or neglect. While it is important to advise the school

principal of a DCFS request… PLEASE do not keep the caseworker or Officer waiting. If the principal is not available, inform him/her later.

(4) **INTERVIEW:** When the child(ren) comes to the office, identify a private area where the investigator can met with the student. Don't attempt to advise or ask the student if they want someone from the school or another individual to be with them. DCSF investigators have the specific responsibility to ask the child if they are comfortable or would like a support person present.

(5) **PARENT NOTIFICATION:** Following the child(ren) interview, the CPS investigator will, in accordance with Utah law, make contact with the parent/guardian. **School personnel must not make contact or advise the parent/guardian of the DCFS visit.** Sometimes, the nature of CPS cases is contingent upon immediate law enforcement and/or Court involvement that could jeopardize the safety of a child by contacting the parent/guardian. Again, parent notification is also part of the role of the investigator. Parents/guardians and other siblings should not be told by school staff about the interview. It is critical that no one should be told of interview, except on an official need to know basis. The parent/guardian will be notified by the agency.

(6) **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE:** As reminder, if you suspects child abuse or neglect you must report it as soon as possible to DCFS or law enforcement. Although a principal or counselor may be told about the suspected abuse, the responsibility to report is upon the staff person (teacher, secretary, custodian, etc.), who has first hand information or concern? The Law states that the report must be made to an authorized person that means DCFS or law enforcement. Although the principal and counselor can be a support to the person making the report, the person with the first hand knowledge is responsible to make the report. Reports can be made anonymously if necessary.

Reporting concerns of child abuse/neglect:

1-877-797-3237

DCFS 652-2960