



## **Process for Addressing Parent and Community Member Concerns**

### **Conflict Resolution**

Christopher House Elementary School is committed to working with families to address their concerns in a timely and transparent way. The Christopher House Elementary School principal is responsible for making decisions that are in the best interest of the school. Occasionally, a scholar or parent may make a request and/or have an issue or grievance that he or she believes is not being addressed in a manner consistent with the philosophy of the school or its policies and procedures. If this occurs, it is the responsibility of both parties to address the concerns or issues in a constructive dialogue. The grievance process has a maximum of three steps, but resolution may be reached at any step in the process identified.

Step One: The scholar or parent presents his or her grievance or issue to the staff member with whom he or she has the conflict. The staff member should address the grievance, attempt to resolve it, and give the scholar a decision within a reasonable amount of time.

Step Two: If there is dissatisfaction with the decision or if it is not within the scope of the staff member's responsibilities to respond, the scholar or parent should approach the principal. Following a review of the concern, the principal will confer and determine a response to the issue raised. The response is submitted in writing to the scholar or parent with the explained decision.

Step Three: If the response given by the Principal seems unreasonable to the scholar or parent, he or she should then submit a written request for a hearing before the Chief Executive Officer. Following a review of the request and an investigation of the issue, the principal will schedule a meeting with the involved parties. After considering the contents of the written request for a hearing, information collected during the investigation, and information clarified during the hearing, the principal will communicate a decision in writing to all involved parties.

Step Four: If the response given by the Chief Executive Officer seems unreasonable to the scholar or parent, he or she should then submit a written request for a hearing before the Christopher House Board. Following a review of the request and an investigation of the issue, the principal will schedule a meeting with the involved parties. After considering the contents of the written request for a hearing, information collected during the investigation, and information clarified during the hearing, the principal will communicate a decision in writing to all involved parties.



## **Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment**

Bullying, intimidation, and (sexual) harassment are not acceptable in any form and will not be tolerated at school or any school-related activity, on school property, on school buses and transportation vehicles, or through a school computer, network, or other school electronic equipment. The school will protect scholars against retaliation for reporting incidents of bullying, intimidation, or (sexual) harassment, and will take disciplinary action against any scholar who participates in such conduct.

No person shall harass, intimidate or bully another based upon a perceived race, color, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, gender identity, order of protection status, status as homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic. The school and district will not tolerate harassing, intimidating conduct, or bullying, whether verbal, physical, or visual that affects the tangible benefits of education, that unreasonably interferes with a scholar's educational performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Bullying means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a scholar that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of: (1) placing the scholar in reasonable fear of harm to the scholar's person or property; (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the scholar's physical or mental health; (3) substantially interfering with the scholar's academic performance; or (4) substantially interfering with the scholar's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

Examples of prohibited conduct include, without limitation, any use of violence, intimidation, force, noise, coercion, threats, stalking, harassment, sexual harassment, public humiliation, theft or destruction of property, retaliation, hazing, bullying, bullying through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment, or other comparable conduct.

Scholars who believe they are victims of bullying, intimidation, or harassment or have witnessed such activities are encouraged to discuss the matter with the scholar nondiscrimination coordinator, building administrator, or a complaint manager. Scholars may choose to report to a person of the scholar's same sex. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate. Scholars who make good faith complaints will not be disciplined.



Any scholar who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in bullying, intimidation, or harassment will be subject to disciplinary consequences as provided in this handbook, including but not limited to, suspension and expulsion consistent with the school discipline policy. Parents of scholars who have engaged in the above behavior will be notified. Any scholar making a knowingly false accusation regarding harassment may also be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Investigations are completed by the Principal or their designee. An investigation will be completed within 5 school days of receipt of a report and documented within the system, and will be given to parents within 10 school days. The investigation will include interviewing all parties involved and any adults who witnessed the incident or may have reliable information. Individual interviews will take place in a private setting with all involved parties. The goal of the interview is to determine how often the behavior has occurred, any past incident or continuing pattern of behavior, and the impact of the behaviors on the targeted student's education. The Principal or designee will make a determination whether the allegations of bullying are substantiated or not and document the determination based on the bullying criteria. They will then notify all parties involved of the outcome of the investigation.

**Abuse and Neglect:** According to the Chicago Public Schools Board Report:18-0627-PO3. Document has been paraphrased)

## **I. DEFINITIONS**

A. An "abused child" means a child whose parent, immediate family member, parent's paramour, any individual residing in the same home as the child, any employee, volunteer, vendor or contractor at the child's school, or any other person responsible for the child's welfare:

1. Inflicts, causes to be inflicted, allows to be inflicted, or creates a substantial risk of, physical injury by other than accidental means, which causes or would be likely to cause death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;
2. Commits or allows to be committed a sex offense against the child;
3. Commits or allows to be committed an act of torture upon the child;
4. Inflicts excessive corporal punishment;
5. Commits or allows to be committed the offense of involuntary servitude, involuntary sexual servitude or human trafficking upon a child;
- or 6. Allows, encourages or requires a child to commit an act of prostitution.



B. A “neglected child” means any child who is not receiving the proper support, medical or remedial care necessary for the child’s well-being, including adequate food, clothing, or shelter, or a child who is abandoned without a proper plan of care by parents or other persons responsible for the child’s welfare.

C. “Mandated reporters” include all school personnel (including administrators and both certificated and non-certificated school employees), educational advocates assigned to a child pursuant to the School Code, social workers, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, recreational program personnel, registered psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, and others, who have reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be an abused or neglected child.

D. “Grooming” is behavior an adult uses to build an emotional connection with children to gain their trust and break down their inhibitions for the purpose of sexual abuse. An adult may be “grooming” a child or engaging in inappropriately intimate behavior with a child when the adult creates isolated, one-on-one interactions with a child (e.g., transporting a child without the written authorization of the principal and the parent, texting or direct messaging); gives gifts to a particular child (e.g., money, clothing); crosses physical boundaries (e.g., touching, giving prolonged frontal hugs, or making the child sit on the adult’s lap).

**Mandated Reporters:** All school personnel, including teachers and administrators, are required by law to immediately report any and all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Mandated reporters are not required to communicate suspicions or reports to the parents/guardians. Each staff member completes the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) online training module. Christopher House staff will use their training to determine when students are being abused or neglected. Staff will not have students remove clothing to check for abuse. If sexual abuse is suspected, the Principal can gather information from the student by asking questions. They then can use this information to request a formal investigation by Chicago Public Schools investigators. Reporting and documenting reasonable suspicions of child abuse or neglect is initiated by the staff member calling DCFS Hotline at 1-800-252-2873 (1-800-25-ABUSE). After calling the hotline, the staff member will notify their principal/supervisor and complete the written confirmation for no later than 48 hours from when the call was placed. Confidentiality will be preserved by the staff member who placed the call and will only notify applicable staff members such as the school nurse, school social worker, CPS district staff and police. If needed, the mandated reporter is responsible for cooperating with DCFS during any investigations. When the Principal or



designee determines that a child is identified as abused or neglected, they can seek medical assistance for the child through the Chicago Police Department by calling 9-1-1. If the Principal or designee feels it is unsafe for the child to go home, they can not allow the child to go home until the DCFS interview has happened. The Principal will assign a mental health professional to support the student and notify teachers of the Hotline call and maintain a copy of the written confirmation and any police report in the student's file.

### **Reporting and Documenting Grooming and Inappropriately Intimate Behaviors**

If an employee witnesses any type of interaction or is told information that a staff member is grooming a child needs to follow the steps in paragraph C on mandated reporting to DCFS. If the employee does not have a reasonable suspicion that grooming, sex abuse or sexual exploitation has occurred or is occurring or has questions based on their observations they need to reach out to their principal as soon as possible. Once the Principal receives the report, they need to determine if there is reasonable suspicion of grooming, sex abuse or sexual exploitation has occurred or is occurring report to DCFS must be made. If there is no reasonable suspicion of hat grooming, sex abuse or sexual exploitation must create an incident report with information shared, why they believe there no hat grooming, sex abuse or sexual exploitation has occurred and any other relevant information.

### **Unfounded Hotline Reports**

Mandated reporters receive information on findings made and actions taken when a hotline call is made. Within 10 days of receipt of the "unfounded" notice, if a mandated reporter feels the determination was inaccurate can request a review by the Multi-Disciplinary Review Committee within DCFS. If the mandated reporter feels the child is continuing to be abused or neglected the mandated reporter shall contact the Principal as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours after receiving the Hotline report is unfounded to request a review of the DCFS investigation. If the case involves grooming, sex abuse or sexual exploitation, the principal will forward the matter to the Office of the Inspector General.

### **Cooperating with Division of Child Protection (DCP) Investigation**

If a DCP investigator comes to interview a child who is suspected of abuse or neglect or a student who witnessed abuse or neglect, the principal or designee should follow the school procedure for interviewing Students. If a DCP investigator comes to interview an accused teacher the investigator to interview them if possible when not conducting a class to minimize



distractions. If a student needs to go into Protective Custody through DCP or the police, the principal or designee must ask the investigator/police for their contact name and telephone number. Notify parents or guardians that protective custody has been taken and provide them information. They must also document an incident report and put it into the students file.

### **Requests for School Records, Subpoenas and Court Orders in Relation to Reports of Abuse or Neglect**

A DCP investigator may review a document from the student's school records in only two circumstances. In an emergency situation, when the principal determines a certain school record is useful and needed to protect the health or safety of the student. Within three working days of the emergency record release, parents will be notified in writing who gave the record release, that a record was released and date of release. Any staff member who receives a subpoena to testify and their supervisor has to allow them to attend.

### **Upon Notification of Result of DCFS Case**

If the principal receives written notice that a Hotline report and a student was "indicated" by DCFS, the principal will have the school clerk place the notice in the student's temporary school record. If the school receives notice that a Hotline report was "unfounded" by DCFS, the principal shall direct the clerk to remove information regarding the report from their school record and return documentation to DCFS.

### **Internal Reporting and Investigating of Employees, Volunteers and Contractors suspected of Child Abuse or Neglect**

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) can investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect by employees, vendors or contractors, or volunteers. Those involved are required to cooperate with the authorized investigators to find time for interviews and provide requested documentation. Those that fail to comply are subject to appropriate discipline, as outlined below.

School Administration will determine whether to remove accused employees from student contact while an investigation is pending. When an adult is accused of sexually abusing a student, the adult will be removed from contact with students pending the results of the investigation.

### **Penalties**



Each staff member has an obligation to report all instances of suspected child abuse or neglect immediately to the appropriate state department, and to his or her supervisor, or to cause such a report to be made. Reports and investigation of suspected child abuse shall be kept strictly confidential. Failure to comply with this confidentiality policy shall be grounds for immediate termination. Inappropriate interaction with a child constitutes grounds for immediate termination.

The State Superintendent of Education may suspend or revoke the license of any educator who knowingly fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

### **See Something Say Something: Protocol for Reporting Allegations of Sexual Misconduct**

#### **If the Allegation Involves an Adult**

1. If it's an emergency call 9-1-1
2. Call the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS)
  - a. 1-800-25-ABUSE (252-2973)
3. Call the Office of Inspector General (OIG)
  - a. 1-833-TELL CPS (835-5277)

#### **If the Allegation Involves Only Students-Principal**

- If It's an emergency call 9-1-1
- Call DCFS if you suspect abuse or neglect
  - 1-800-25-ABUSE (252-2873)
- Submit a Report
  - You or a designee must create a report
- Call Office of Student Protections & Title IX

#### **If the Allegation Involves Only Students-Staff**

- If It's an emergency call 9-1-1
- Call DCFS if you suspect abuse or neglect
  - 1-800-25-ABUSE (252-2873)
- Notify the School Principal by phone, in person or email
- Call Office of Student Protections & Title IX

